01 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:27 Page 1

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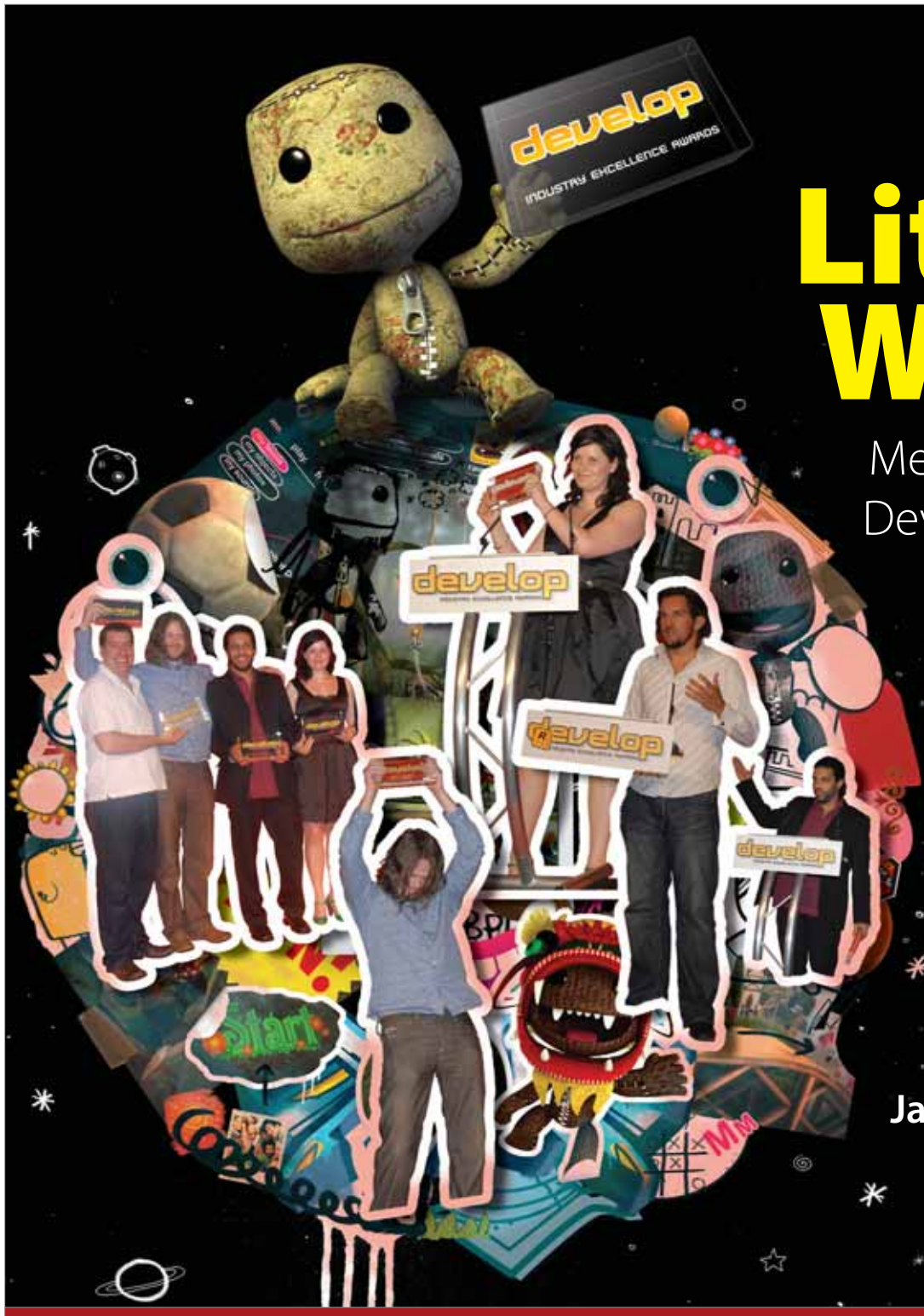

LittleBig Winners

Media Molecule hits the Develop Awards jackpot

ALSO INSIDE

Develop Awards: Review in pictures

Interview with Grand Prix winner Codemasters

Jagex eyes console games

Scotland Studio Special

PLUS ▸ IGDA IN TURMOIL ▪ CECIL GOES DIGITAL ▪ TRINIGY & HAVOK TIE UP ▪ TOOLS NEWS & MORE

02 Dev97_final 29/7/09 10:27 Page 1

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PLAYSTATION 3

03 Dev97_final 30/7/09 17:27 Page 1

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Editor-in-Chief
Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

Staff Writer
Will Freeman
will.freeman@intentmedia.co.uk

Online Editor
Rob Crossley
rob.crossley@intentmedia.co.uk

Designer
Dan Bennett
dan.bennett@intentmedia.co.uk

Executive Editor
Owain Bennallack
owainb@gmail.com

Advertising Manager
Katie Rawlings
katie.rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising Executive
Sam Robinson
sam.robinson@intentmedia.co.uk

Production Manager
Suzanne Powles
suzanne.powles@intentmedia.co.uk

Managing Editor
Lisa Foster
lisa.foster@intentmedia.co.uk

Publisher
Stuart Dinsey
stuart.dinsey@intentmedia.co.uk

Contributors
Brian Baglow, John Broomhall, Nick Gibson, Fred Hasson, Dave Jefferies, Phil Marley, Marc Petit, Mark Rein, Billy Thomson, Naoto Yoshioka

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Contents

DEVELOP ISSUE 97 AUGUST 2009

ALPHA

05 - 11 › DEV NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE
IGDA members put pressure on its board; Jagex confirms its plans to try out developing for consoles; Charles Cecil turns to iPhone; plus a digest of all the big announcements for games development from the past month

14 - 21 › OPINION AND ANALYSIS
Nick Gibson looks at another extraordinary games business; Owain Bennallack questions the rise of quirky interfaces; Billy Thomson dissects co-op gaming; and David Jefferies debates Microsoft's new TRCs for screen resolutions

22 › GDC EUROPE PREVIEW
Our guide to this month's new German games development conference

26 › INTRODUCING DEVELOP-ONLINE.NET
A quick guide to all the great features on our new site

BETA

30 - 34 › DEVELOP AWARDS REVIEW
COVER STORY: We look back at July's big night for games developers

38 › HIGHLAND GAMES
Kickstarting our profile of the Scottish games industry, Brian Baglow offers a history of games development in the region

41-46 › SCOTLAND'S GOT GAME
Profiles of key Scottish games studios and an outline of investment opportunties available to those in the region

48 › TIME TO MOVE ON
Fred Hasson offers up some key insight on what the games industry has to do to make sure its new dialogue with Government is used to its fullest

BUILD

52 › TOOLS NEWS
Trinigy and Havok talk to us about their plans to integrate each other's tech

57 › KEY RELEASE: MODO 401
We look at the latest version of the increasingly-popular modelling tool

61 › TUTORIAL: VIDEO GAMES
Lightning Fish on how using video recording in games can be cheap and useful

develop DIRECTORY 71-79
STUDIOS, TOOLS, SERVICES AND COURSES

CODA

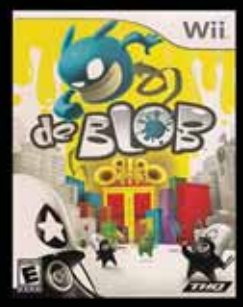
80 - 81 › DEVELOP CONFERENCE REVIEW
Picture special looking back at last month's big conference

82 › MY FAVOURITE GAME
Nick Baynes on why Metal Gear Solid is a classic franchise

Project5:Layout 1 26/5/09 17:23 Page 1

Look Who's #1

Top Products for the Top Games



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05 Dev97_final 30/7/09 12:22 Page 1

ALPHA
ADVENTURES IN GAMES DEVELOPMENT: NEWS, VIEWS & MORE

"The more console manufacturers try to please everyone, the bigger the risk of satisfying no one…"
Owain Bennallack, p17

Jagex gets ready for consoles
News, p06

Preview of this month's GDC Europe
Events, p22

We offer a tour of our new website
News, p26

IGDA in turmoil?

Unrest brews amongst members of developer association as board refuses to oust trademark enforcer Tim Langdell

by Ed Fear

Although it might finally have a new executive director, the International Game Developers Association is facing its toughest challenge yet – and one that could result in mass walk-outs.

Already struggling due to falling dues in the face of the recession and a much-discussed general apathy of its membership, the furore over current board member Tim Langdell and his 'trademark bullying' of independent developers is threatening to cause further resignations by disillusioned members.

Langdell has recently come under fire as his history of asserting trademark over the word 'Edge' came to light. Most recently, he caused French independent developer Mobigame's award-winning iPhone game *EDGE* to be pulled from the App Store due to a trademark dispute.

While the legality of Langdell's actions aren't in question, his position on the board of the IGDA – an organisation that seeks to, in its own words, 'advocate on issues that affect the development community' – is under significant scrutiny.

Responding to mounting public criticsm, board chair Bob Bates wrote: "The fact is that the IGDA cannot take a position in what is actually a legal dispute between two companies regarding an alleged trademark infringement. We believe that Trademark and IP protection is vitally important to independent developers… our board of directors are pledged to support the core principles of the IGDA."

> ***"It doesn't bode well for the IGDA's future if we can't organise this vote."***
> Paul Sinnett, UK
> IGDA Advocate

As such, Bates won't use his power as board chair to call an emergency meeting – but some elements of the membership are hoping to invoke the org's constitution to force such a meeting to take place.

One such person is Corvus Elrod, an independent contractor from the US. He discovered that, according to the bylaws, a special meeting can be called should ten per cent of the membership request one – and so set up a petition calling for such a meeting.

"Volunteer organizations work best when the rank and file feel empowered to effect change," he told *Develop*. "We are the IGDA – not the executive director, not the board. Us. Voting on issues is more than our right, it's our responsibility. If we're not willing to take a stand on issues, we have no business asking the IGDA to take a stand for us."

At the time of going to press, the petition had 252 votes, with almost 1,000 still to go to reach the necessary ten per cent mark. The petition's lack of impact has caused some, including UK IGDA advocate Paul Sinnett and supporter of Elrod's petition, to worry.

He told *Develop*: "I think it's unlikely that we'll reach ten per cent, given the response so far. But it doesn't bode well for the future of the IGDA if we can't. It proves the critics' point [that the membership is largely apathetic]."

And if the vote fails, and it proves too difficult to unite a fraction of the membership, is that the end for the push?

"No," asserts Elrod. "We'll replace [the board] with individuals who will listen – one election cycle at a time.

"I will remain involved with the IGDA until it proves impossible to justify the amount of effort I put into the organisation. Throughout this controversy, the private and public discourse with supporters and detractors of my efforts have been respectful, informative, and challenging.

"There are days when I'm tired and want to throw in the towel, but at the end of the day, I only have to briefly reflect on how important the IGDA members are to me, both personally and professionally, and it renews my desire to stay the course and fight for what I believe in. The members of IGDA deserve nothing less."

www.igda.org

Elrod's petition can be found at www.bit.ly/11xMkj

06-07 Dev97_V2 30/7/09 18:51 Page 1

Editorial

Media darlings

One of the frustrating, if brilliant bits about my job is getting to see new games way before they are officially unveiled.

In late 2006 a trip to see a new studio in Guildford posed the same problem. This team – going by the curious name of Media Molecule – were charming but also, well, a bit odd. Founded by a group of younger developers (who were clearly close friends), they were based in an office hidden above a bathroom showroom. There were about 10 staff spread across some tightly packed desks. Their meeting room just had couches in it, and boxes of old consoles.

Yet amongst all the organised chaos they had just bagged a deal with Sony for an unnamed game that I saw running. It featured a child made of cloth, physics-based platforming and 'something really special we can't talk about yet and don't want to sound arrogant about'.

I don't really need to remind you about the rest: the GDC reveal for that game, *LittleBigPlanet*, the gushing praise from the specialist press, and Media Molecule's eventual star status for making user-generated content something easy for all.

And of course, most recently, winning five Develop Awards last month. It's the most one company has taken home on a single night, and is proof that the humblest beginnings can reap the biggest rewards.

But Media Molecule's success isn't just proof that British studios are strong and can turn out games which garner massive peer respect. Or even that Sony knows when to back the right horse. It's proof that quiet confidence – and most importantly, commitment to your vision, can truly pay off.

So congratulations to them. And of course the 14 other winners – including Development Legend Phil Harrison, who had handed Media Molecule that Sony contract three years ago. And our commiserations to those who went home empty handed; it was, as ever, a hotly contested year. But there's always the 2010 awards to look forward to…

Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Jagex ready to

As the release of its next MMO draws near, the UK's biggest studio says

by Will Freeman

UK independent Jagex has confirmed to *Develop* that it is looking towards releasing its first console game.

In an exclusive interview with *Develop*, senior staff at the studio – one of the largest in Europe – said that it will start work on the project after work is complete on its next MMO, currently codenamed *Mechscape*.

"The earliest thing I did as CTO is make sure we became quite program-agnostic," revealed Jagex's Mark Gerhard, who was appointed as CEO earlier this year.

"That's not just down to the client that we run, or even down to the platform of our targets. It's down to the languages. We're in a good shape now to be able to go to console, and not run on JVM right now." He also revealed: "I suspect that the next project to come out of the studio will be a console game, which will be based on a proven IP."

Despite still carrying a working title, the arrival of *Mechscape* is imminent, and while Jagex head of games development Henrique Olifiers has refused to be drawn on a release date, he did offer some perspective on why the game has been underway since 2006.

> ***"The first thing I did as CTO was make us program agnostic. We're in a good shape to go to console."***
>
> Mark Gerhard, Jagex

"We are getting there," promised Olifiers.

"We are polishing the game now. Most of the job is done, but we don't want to compromise with the date. We perform play tests all the time, and we want to have the freedom to change as much as we want. We want to release the product when we say 'this is finished and this is brilliant', and not be pressured by any commitment that we could have made to the community.

"Ultimately we're only going to launch it when we're happy with it," added Gerhard. "Call it internal quality control if you will. That's why we haven't committed to a date.

"It's not about the right time to launch, a PR opportunity or a commercial opportunity. It's really just about 'when is this game ready to go out so it will be fun?' That approach is really us going back to our roots, if you will. It was always in the company's DNA.

06-07 Dev97_V2 30/7/09 18:51 Page 2

conquer consoles

it is going to broaden horizons away from browser-based technology – and onto TVs

Concept art from Jagex's next MMO, which should appeal to gamers slightly older than the Runescape demographic

"I think we dabbled for a year or so with the 'hack, ship, hack, ship, hack, ship,' model; being more corporate or commercial or what ever the right term is. That just wasn't us.

"So our return to roots is frustrating to some in terms of 'when is it going to come out?' But the game? I can say its looking good. The guys are doing a fantastic job and I'd say we have one last big push. It's so close it hurts."

A sci-fi MMO, *Mechscape* is designed for a more mature player than those typical of *Runescape*'s user base; a demographic the team at Jagex is confident it can court without alienating newcomers, says Olifier.

In the interview with *Develop*, which is available to read in full at on our website, the company CEO also elaborated on the studio's relationship with Java, and its influence over the creation of *Mechscape*.

"I guess we started off again being Java guys, and the fact is that really Java couldn't do everything we needed it to do," explained Gerhard. "So Jagex built a 'Java Audio Graphics Extension'. We had to write our own library for audio and for graphics. It's come a long way, but our entire framework is its own proprietary systems from end-to-end, from web servers through to file systems – everything is by Jagex.

"We used the Java syntax, but everything else is built in house. That technology allowed us to do incredible things that you'll be able to see with *Mechscape*. The experience is a real evolution, and it's surprising because it's running in a browser. And I don't think you'd be able to do that with traditional Java, if you will, but that's nine years of development in the making. We sometimes surprise ourselves. "

www.jagex.com

Henrique Olifiers, head of Jagex's next MMO, and CEO Mark Gerhard say the firm's next release is imminent

develop mobile

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Autodesk to hold education summit
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08 Dev96_final 30/7/09 14:09 Page 1

Cecil starts digital Revolution

New 'Pocket' studio to focus on making new games and revamping IP for iPhone, PSPgo and other handheld formats

by Michael French

Famed UK games designer Charles Cecil has opened a new division at his studio dedicated to digital self-publishing.

Revolution Pocket will focused on developing Cecil's older IP and new creations for iPhone, iPod touch, Android, PSPgo and other handheld platforms.

Cecil is just the latest in a string of long-running UK developers who have turned to digital distribution.

"Digital distribution has changed the game for developers, and it's great to be able to communicate directly with our audience," Cecil told us. "By tackling development and publishing duties ourselves, we can strengthen our relationship with them and retain complete commercial and creative freedom – not just in terms of content, but in terms of distribution and, crucially, pricing.

"The model allows us to ensure that our games offer incredible value for money. We're bringing high-quality, intelligent, narrative-based gaming to a whole new platform – some owners of which will have enjoyed the games before, and others who will be experiencing our titles for the very first time – and that's something I find tremendously exciting."

His first game is a 'remastered' iPhone version of his game *Beneath a Steel Sky*.

The game builds on the original, featuring new animated movies from Dave Gibbons, co-creator of *Watchmen*, plus a new context-sensitive help system for players of different skill levels and new remastered audio.

"The adventure genre is undergoing a renaissance, and we're thrilled to be bringing a revamped and remastered version of this classic adventure to a whole new audience," he added.

"*Beneath a Steel Sky – Remastered* is just the start of what we want to do. We'll be announcing more Revolution Pocket titles soon – some of which people will recognise, others which will be wholly original. But our aim with whatever title we release is to ensure we offer a different type of game to those currently available, illustrating that modern handheld games don't have to be disposable – they can be engrossing, entertaining and intelligent."

www.revolution.co.uk

Cecil was demoing his Beneath a Steel Sky iPhone game to the media and the industry at the Develop Conference. Not sure when he'll be officially unveiling that iPhone/wine glass peripheral he's holding in this picture, however

DEVELOP DIARY

YOUR COMPLETE GAMES DEVELOPMENT EVENT CALENDAR FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD...

Part of the Edinburgh Festival 09 EDINBURGH INTERACTIVE

EDINBURGH INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL
August 13th & 14th
Edinburgh, Scotland
edinburghinteractivefestival.co,

This two-day conference seeks to bring games industry leaders together in the midst of the Edinburgh Festival proper.

This year, key speakers include EA Sports' Peter Moore, while topics will range from browser and Facebook games through to tax breaks and the supposed death of the big budget console game.

Dare to be Digital's ProtoPlay exhibition also takes place at the same time, so if you're in the neighbourhood and fancy meeting the developers of tomorrow make sure you take time to go and check it out.

AUGUST 2009

GAMES CONVENTION ONLINE
July 31st to August 2nd
Leipzig, Germany
www.gamesconvention.com

EDINBURGH INTERACTIVE
August 13th & 14th
Edinburgh, Scotland
edinburghinteractivefestival.com

GDC EUROPE
August 17th to 19th
Cologne, Germany
www.gdceurope.com

GAMESCOM
August 19th to 23rd
Cologne, Germany
www.gamescom-cologne.com

SEPTEMBER 2009

GDC AUSTIN
September 14th to 18th
Texas, USA
www.gdcaustin.com

GAME CONVENTION ASIA
September 17th to 20th
Singapore
www.gc-asia.sg

OCTOBER 2009

GDC CHINA 2009
October 11th to 13th
Shanghai, China
china.gdconf.com

CASUAL CONNECT KYIV
October 22nd to 24th
Kyiv, Ukraine
kyiv.casualconnect.org

LONDON GAMES FESTIVAL
w/c October 26th
London, UK
www.londongamesfestival.com

LONDON GAMES CONFERENCE
October 27th
London, UK
www.mcvuk.com/events

CASUAL GAMES FORUM
October 29th
London
www.casualgames-forum.com

NOVEMBER 2009

DEVELOP IN LIVERPOOL
November 5th
Liverpool, UK
www.developconference.com

DECEMBER 2009

GAME CONNECTION EUROPE
December 8th to 10th
Lyon, France
www.game-connection.com

THE DEVELOP QUIZ
December 21st
London
www.develop-online.net

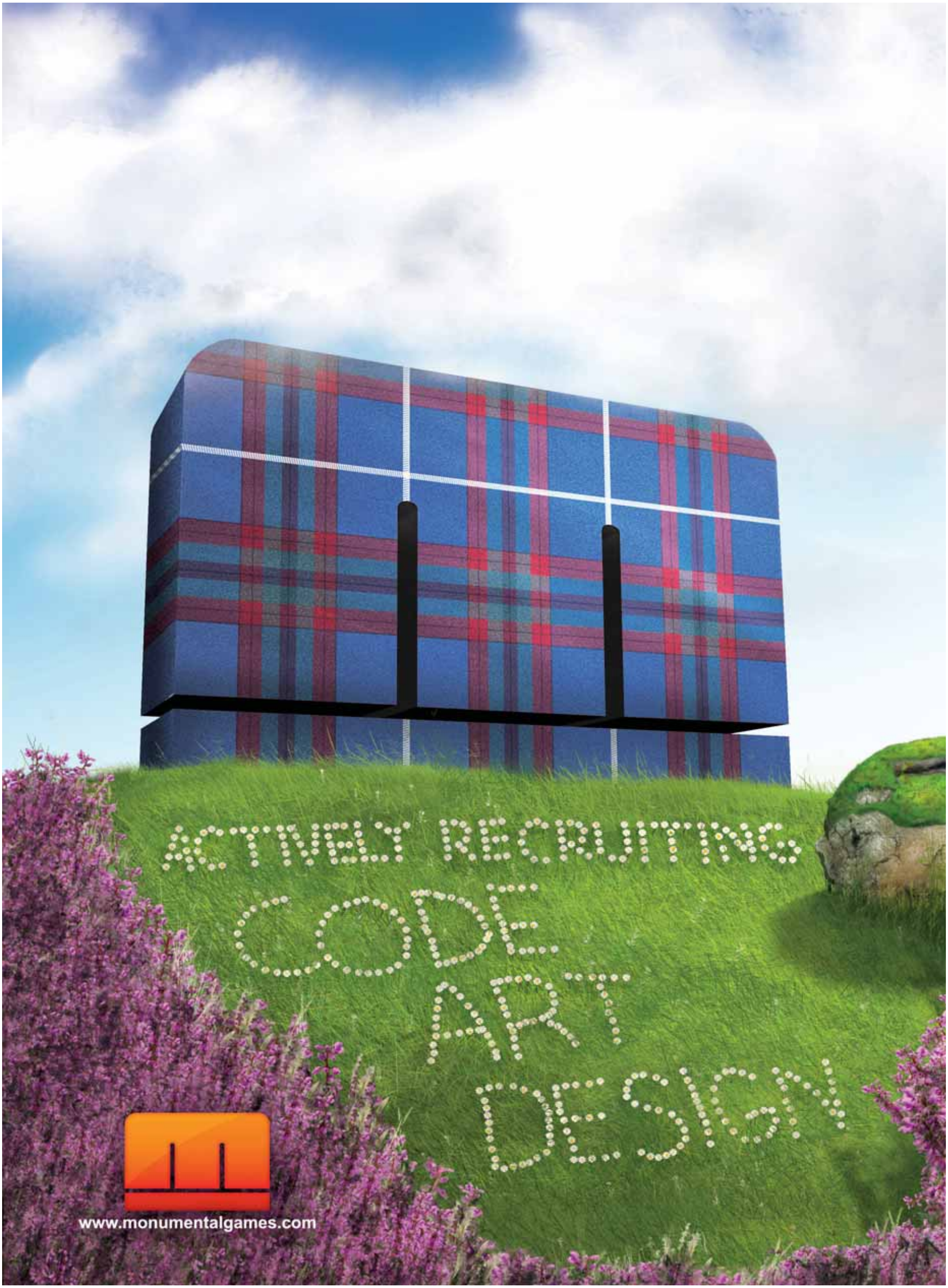
FEBRUARY 2010

DICE SUMMIT 2009
February 17th to 19th
Las Vegas, USA
www.dicesummit.org

MARCH 2010

GDC 2010
March 9th to 13th
San Francisco, USA
www.gdconf.com

09 Dev97_final 29/7/09 10:48 Page 1



10-11 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:24 Page 1

WorldView

Our monthly digest of the past month's global games news…

DEALS

Xaitment has scored a couple of Asian licensees for its xaitMap and xaitMove tech – Vietnam-based **Emobi Games** and Singapore's **Envisage Reality**. The full XaitEngine has also now been integrated into Gamebryo.

Robot Entertainment, one of the ex-Ensemble studios, has signed up **Trinigy**'s Vision Engine.

Emergent has integrated **Pixelux**'s Digital Molecular Matter destruction system into its Gamebryo engine.

Newcastle-based **Mere Mortals** has joined **Tiga**, praising its Government lobbying.

Microsoft Games Studios has acquired a master licence to **Scaleform**'s GFx UI middleware. As part of the deal, **Ruffian** will be using it for *Crackdown 2*.

2K Games has implemented **Hansoft**'s eponymous project management and QA suite.

Activision has licensed **NaturalMotion**'s morpheme animation tech. **Robomondo** will be using the tech for upcoming peripheral-fest *Tony Hawk: Ride*.

VODAFONE'S DEV COMPETITION

Mobile operator Vodafone is trying to kick-start its own alternative to the App Store by calling on devs to make widgets for various mobile phones.

Betavine, Vodafone's mobile developer community, is offering weekly prizes to mobile developers throughout August in its Summer of Widgets competition.

Though widgets are typically non-game-related mobile phone tools, creatives can of course break the mould with a unique widget-based game.

Widgets developed as part of this competition will not be monetised, though entrants will be able to take their App ideas to an untapped community and receive important feedback.

Winning widgets, of which there will be three each week, will likely receive much attention as well as prizes. Vodafone will open its Widget Manager later in 2009, through which widgets can be sold to customers.

www.betavine.net

UNITED KINGDOM

WHEN PHILIP OLIVER MET ALISTAIR DARLING

Chancellor Alistair Darling this month invited Blitz Games CEO Philip Oliver for a meeting to discuss recommendations on how the Government could help the British game development industry. Oliver said that it was 'hugely encouraging' to see the Chancellor consult the games industry on the issues of skills and education.

www.blitzgamesstudios.com

SCOTLAND

REALTIME WORLDS CONTINUES EXPANSION

APB developer Realtime Worlds has seen its ranks swell to 250 people, and plans to hit 300 people by 2010. To accommodate the sudden influx, the studio has acquired a further 8,000 square feet of offices, taking the accumulated total to 34,000 square feet. *APB* is to be published by EA in February or March next year.

www.realtimeworlds.com

UNITED STATES

NINTENDO 'EXCITED' ABOUT THIRD PARTIES

Think Nintendo doesn't care about third parties? Its collaboration with Team Ninja on *Metroid: Other M* has got Nintendo of America boss Reggie Fils-Aime all a flutter about further collaborations. "There are a lot of development teams and publishers who have realised, 'Wow, Nintendo is open to these partnerships. Let's think of other ideas we can bring forward.' I find that exciting," he said.

www.nintendo.com

UNITED KINGDOM

MIDWAY NEWCASTLE RUNS OUT OF TIME

Despite a last-minute scramble to secure a saviour, complete with a public reveal of its then-work in progress IP *Necessary Force*, Midway Newcastle sadly closed its doors this month. "As the chief of the studio it is a wrong and premature end to a great studio that was going in the right direction," former head Craig Duncan told *Develop*. "I'm sure the guys will go onto great things and they all have my thanks for the commitment and professionalism shown throughout the time I managed them."

www.midway.com

UNITED STATES

NOLAN BUSHNELL RETURNS TO GAME DEVELOPMENT

Atari founder Nolan Bushnell is to make a return to games development with *Battleswarm: Field of Honor*, a free-to-play RTS/FPS hybrid, according to *USA Today*. The game depicts a conflict between two sides, one of which is played via an RTS interface and one as a first-person shooter. It'll be monetised via microtransaction-based combat upgrades.

www.uwink.com

NEW ZEALAND

PETER JACKSON NO LONGER WORKING ON HALO GAME

It was a big announcement at X06, but Peter Jackson's collaboration with Microsoft Game Studios has been confirmed as scrapped. Speaking to Joystiq, Jackson said: "The Halo project is no longer happening. It sort of collapsed when the movie didn't end up happening." It's believed that his Wingnut Interactive studio is now developing original IP.

www.microsoftgamestudios.com

JAPAN

'INTERNET ADDICT' WII FIT DESIGNER LEAVES NINTENDO

Here's one from the 'strange news' pile: 33 year-old Motoi Okayama, who's spent the past ten years as a programmer and designer at Nintendo, has quit the firm in order to start a website. A website that's a crowdsourced gallery of photos of action figures. Okayama is a self-confessed 'internet addict', but felt there wasn't scope for online projects at the Japanese giant.

www.fg-site.net

UNITED STATES

MICROSOFT ESTABLISHES 343 INDUSTRIES

In other *Halo* news, Microsoft has formally rebranded its *Halo* franchise management team as 343 Industries. Former Bungie staff member Frank O'Connor, who left the

10-11 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:24 Page 2

FOR THE LATEST NEWS...
HEAD TO WWW.DEVELOP-ONLINE.NET
Our online resource features news, features, analysis and commentary posted daly, and is avaulable via the web, mobile, RSS and daily email and news alert blasts.

DEVELOP CONFERENCE HEADS NORTH

The Develop Conference in Brighton is this year to be twinned with a separate event for all those developers up north.

Develop in Liverpool is a one-day conference designed to further meet the demands of the games development sector based in the northern regions of the UK.

The event – set to take place on November 5th – will go through three tracks and multiple networking sessions including post-event drinks.

"With such an active and vibrant development community north of Birmingham it just makes sense to take the Develop conference to Liverpool," said event director Andy Lane.

"We want as many developers as possible to experience the passion and energy that we saw in Brighton. Develop in Liverpool is at the heart of a region that has long history of development excellence, so we're confident this will be a day fizzing with ideas and insights," he added.

And if you enjoyed this year's Brighton conference, get your diary ready: Develop will be back next year from July 13th to 15th. Providing global warming hasn't sunk Brighton by then.

www.develop-conference.com

developer for Microsoft last year, has been named as creative director of the new team. Its first project is a meta-*Halo* community site *Halo: Waypoint* and *Halo Legends*, a series of seven animated shorts produced by Japanese visual studios.

www.microsoft.com

DENMARK

UNITY TECHNOLOGIES SEES 100 PER CENT GROWTH

Danish engine developer Unity Technologies has seen a doubling in sales and community activity in the past six months, it has reported. To match demand, it's also planning to double staff across its San Francisco, UK and Danish offices.

www.unity3d.com

SINGAPORE

DICE SUMMIT HEADING TO SINGAPORE

The AIAS' annual DICE Summit is to also be held in Singapore this year, alongside Games Convention Asia on September 17th. Already confirmed to talk are Gas Powered Games' Chris Taylor and Masaya Matsuura. "It seemed only natural to create a similar forum in Asia," said AIAS president Joseph Olin.

www.gc-asia.sg

Top 10 Developers Chart – Xxx 2009

#	COMPANY	COUNTRY	PRODUCT
1.	**Nintendo**	**Japan**	**Wii Fit**
2.	EA Canada	Canada	EA Sports Active
3.	The Sims Studio	USA	The Sims 3
4.	Yuke's	Japan	UFC 2009: Undisputed
5.	Radical Entertainment	Canada	Prototype
6.	Volition	USA	Red Faction: Guerilla
7.	Sucker Punch	USA	Infamous
8.	Game Freak	Japan	Pokemon Platinum
9.	Sumo Digital	United Kingdom	Virtua Tennis 2009
10.	Neversoft	USA	Guitar Hero: Metallica

Chart Supplied By: **ChartTrack** charttrack.co.uk | **ELSPA** elspa.com

Giving a DAM

For the first in a series of regular columns, **Ben Board** looks at how developers across Europe can better utilise Xbox Live's services…

IN MY ARTICLE LAST month I introduced the European DAM team, and what we can do for Xbox and Games for Windows developers in our part of the world. This monthly column will be a little more practical. Since its launch, developers have learned to use the formidable grunt of Xbox 360 to create ever more awesome experiences, but there's an arsenal of additional goodies sitting on top of the silicon, too. Gizmos provided by the platform and Xbox Live, our first-class online service, can provide you with proven and effective ways to enrich your game's feature set, and supported by us DAMs and our epic list of contacts. I'll talk a little more about these technologies and what they can do for you.

Let's start with a few features to consider if you want to give your players a top-drawer Xbox experience – and to make some friends in Xbox Towers.

There's more to leaderboards than lap times and high scores. Consider using Game Clips to add replayable recordings of top performances, or mapping the action hotspots with hidden leaderboards and showing those stats on your game site via Web Services.

DLC has become a cornerstone of many successful franchises. It's important to put the right content on Marketplace at the right time relative to the title's launch, but consider letting your primary audience know it's there with an in-game 'message of the day' – easily achieved with Title Managed Storage – while using the Marketplace API enables the player to purchase that content without leaving the game, and that can help your DLC sales.

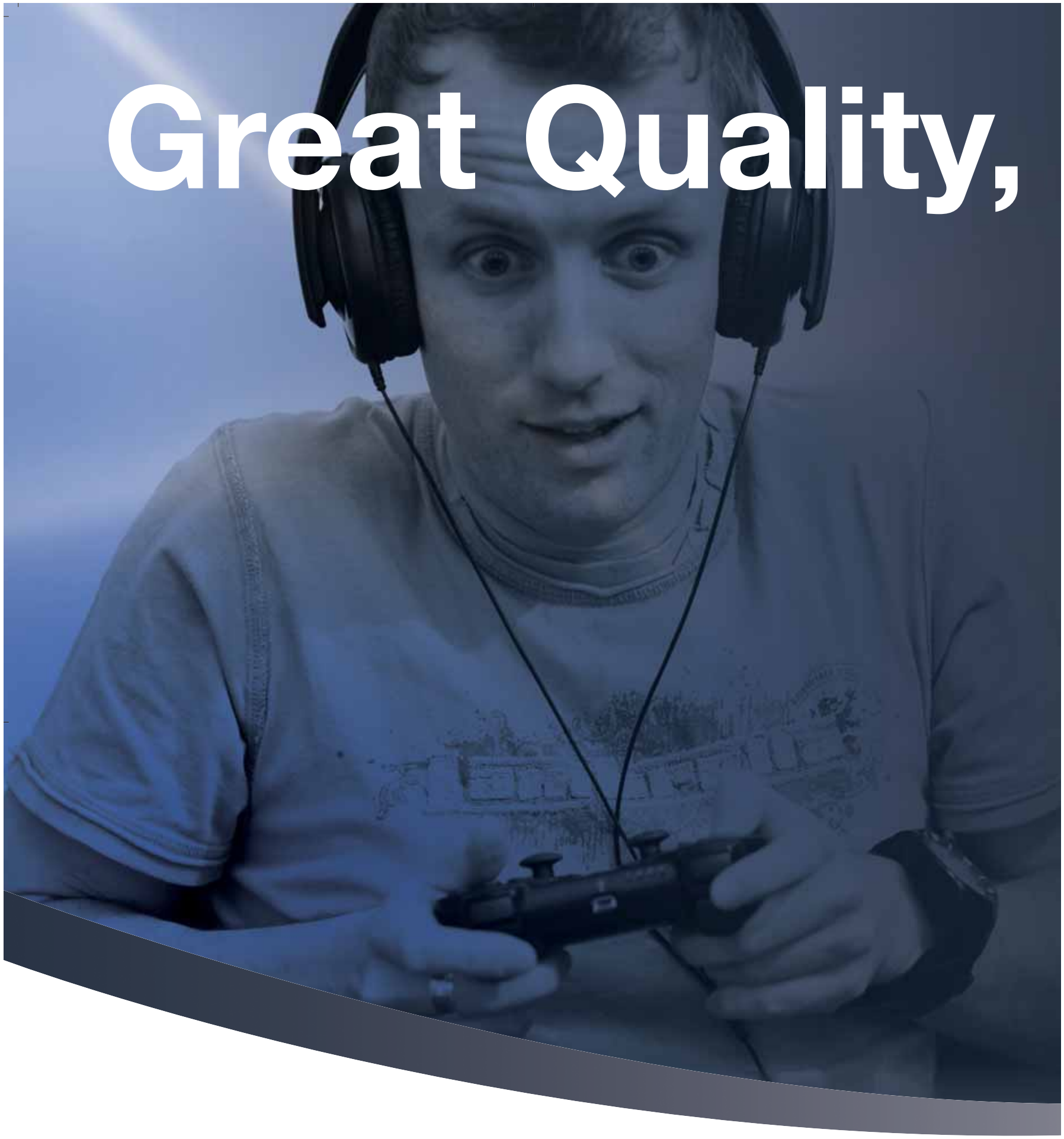
Adopting XLSP (Xbox Live Server Platform) opens many doors: storing screenshots, videos, or player-generated levels, game metrics and stats tracking, clan and community features, a better in-game marketplace, and other online features used to great effect in many of today's big titles.

There's a lot of iceberg below that waterline, yet to be explored. Next month we'll look at the smart use of Achievements.

Ben Board is a European developer account manager at Microsoft. He welcomes registered developers to contact him at eudam@microsoft.com.

12-13 Dev97_final 29/7/09 10:31 Page 1

Great Quality,



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12-13 Dev97_final 29/7/09 10:32 Page 2

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14 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:08 Page 1

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS SPONSORED BY Bethesda SOFTWORKS

COMMENT: BUSINESS

Extraordinary Games Businesses 2: Giant Interactive

by **Nick Gibson,** Games Investor Consulting

For this month's column I want to continue our look at some of the most interesting, innovative and successful companies operating at the fringes of the games industry by turning our attention to Giant Interactive Group.

Giant is a NASDAQ-listed but Shanghai-based MMO developer and operator focused almost exclusively on its indigenous Chinese market. Despite being less than five years old and having only released its first game in '06, Giant has grown rapidly, with sales of $233m in 2008. What distinguishes it from others in the Chinese market and, indeed, from pretty much every other games company on the planet, is its profit margins.

Net profits in 2008 were $163m, an astounding 70 per cent net income margin. This was not even an exceptional year for Giant. 2007 net profits were $156m, a 75 per cent margin. Most traditional games publishers would be delighted with a 15 per cent net income margin, but not even EA or the *WoW*-propelled Activision Blizzard ever achieve this. Yes, those with some financial understanding might argue that net income is not the best tool for comparing profitability, but with every profit measure Giant's results are remarkable.

THE MAKING OF A GIANT

The secret to Giant's success has been its ability to generate Western market Average Revenue Per Paying User (ARPPU) levels from a Chinese player base. So whilst most Chinese operators tend to generate ARPPU of $5 to $7.50 per month, Giant makes $14.60 ARPPU per month from its paying user base of over 1.2m. Again, to add some Western perspective, Blizzard generates around $8 per month from its *WoW* players (excluding retail sales) although this obscures differences between Asian licensing and directly monetised Western subscriptions.

Digging deeper into Giant's performance uncovers an array of novel game design elements and commercial strategies. It also reveals no small amount of controversy, largely centred on the aggressive commercialisation built into its small portfolio of microtransaction-based games and, in particular, the randomised loot purchases in its key title *ZT Online*. Players pay around $0.15 for a key to open a treasure chest that yields random virtual items. Upon opening, the chest reveals a slot-machine-like display that spins through rare items before usually settling on a more common item. In addition to the low chance of gaining rare and valuable items, there is a significant gameplay prize for the player that opens the most chests on any given day. Because other player tallies are kept secret, players can purchase thousands of keys and still not come out top.

The result has been vituperative accusations of gambling and exploitation, and there is no doubt that these commercial practices are at the heart of Giant's unprecedented financial performance. However, the mechanism appears little different to collectible card games such as *Magic Online* and even EA's recent *BattleForge*, which are similarly based around randomised card pack purchases and the injection of artificial scarcity.

Giant did not invent the concept of gameplay-enhancing virtual item sales, but it both popularised it and took it to a new level in China. Progress in *ZT Online* is inextricably linked to how much players pay. Players can play for free but will constantly face glass ceilings. As we have pointed out in previous columns, this is fast becoming the standard for new MMOs in the West, although perhaps not to the extremes utilised by Giant. One of these extremes is the sale of 'insurance' to *ZT Online* players: players can insure (i.e. wager) against their progress in the game, receiving pay-outs potentially greater than their initial investment as they reach various in-game levelling milestones. As players must invariably pay to progress, Giant always wins.

> ***"It has been accused of gambling and exploitation – these practices are at the heart of Giant's unprecedented financial power."***

In many ways, *ZT Online* was uniquely designed for a middle class audience of time-poor but wealthy players that are able and willing to spend money to avoid the time-consuming grind necessary to make early progress in most other MMOs. To reinforce this approach, Giant did something very novel: it established over 500 local sales offices and hired over 3,000 'liaison officers' (i.e. sales staff) tasking them with travelling the country to promote Giant's games and recruit new players. These staff would visit internet cafes and talk players into trying Giant's games over other operators' titles.

Giant's ZT Online is steeped in pay-to-play elements which have proven very lucrative, if very controversial

However, Giant's rampant commercialisation eventually ruffled enough players' feathers and resulted in extensive in-game protests. As a result, the company recently adopted a pacifying measure of launching several variants of *ZT Online* with differing levels of commercialisation. Interestingly, the most aggressively commercial version remains extremely popular and continues to grow. The financial result, however, has been a fall in net profit, although its Q1 2009 margin was still over 62 per cent. Not that the company is worrying too much: it raised $886m when it floated in 2007, it still has $763m sitting on its balance sheet and its current market capitalisation is $1.84bn. It is also one of the only listed games companies financially confident enough to pay a dividend.

The moral of this story is therefore that, whilst there is a limit to how much commercialisation you can get away with, it is almost certainly higher than you might expect.

Nick Gibson is a director at Games Investor Consulting, providing research, strategy consulting and corporate finance services to the games, media and finance industries.
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15 Dev97_final 17/7/09 12:22 Page 1

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02 Dev96_final 24/6/09 16:41 Page 1

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17 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:10 Page 1

COMMENT: INDUSTRY

Will family-friendly controllers cripple the console giants?

by Owain Bennallack

There's no doubt the stars at E3 were the new control devices. Microsoft stole the show with Project Natal, of course, but Sony's PlayStation Motion Controller and the release of Nintendo's Wii MotionPlus kept up the momentum.

All this new hardware might seem unambiguously good news. The desire for more intuitive control methods has seemingly been proven by sales of Wii, DS, *Guitar Hero* and iPhone, and anything that finesses their sensitivity and accuracy can only be welcomed.

New control methods are good news for the games industry, too, since it gets to revisit games or genres to adapt them for the devices, without any of that awkward messing about inventing gameplay.

In this they're reminiscent of the windfall the music industry enjoyed from the shift from LPs to CDs (although we know how that ended, right?).

As for Project Natal, for all the obvious smoke and mirrors, the demos hinted at genuinely fresh experiences. Lionhead's spectacular Milo video was particularly special, albeit better described as concept art rather than a demo – it looked more like a spoof advert from a sci-fi movie than anything we'll enjoy in the next 20 years.

AMUSE YOURSELVES

But here's a contrary take on what even the BBC is describing as 'The Controller Wars': what if, rather than innovation, the controllers hint at desperation? What if the focus on controllers signifies not games going forward, but games getting relegated to the level of sideshow amusements?

The inspiration for this suggestion comes from the protracted demise of the traditional arcade business in the mid-1990s. There were many reasons why the arcades waned, not least the rise of powerful games consoles. Yet you could argue that when advanced graphics and sound became available in everyone's living room, the arcade manufacturers blinked. Instead of continuing to innovate with better gameplay, they let their games stagnate and turned to spectacle instead to draw new punters in.

In place of old-fashioned cabinets, we saw ever more elaborate car rigs, rotational flight simulators, motorbikes, double-team canoe rides, games where you rode horses, and anything else you can imagine doing on a Mark Warner holiday.

The Wii has opened gaming to a wide audience – but will the reduction to a sideshow attraction make gaming throwaway?

> ***"New control methods let the industry revisit games or genres without any awkward messing about inventing gameplay."***

All this hullabaloo made arcades grand places to spend an hour or two on a drunken Friday night with friends. But it also turned them into amusement parks – expensive to visit and ultimately unsatisfying. All that engineering was costly, too, and so prices rose. Few of the punters returned with any regularity. Eventually arcades either closed down or were filled out with pseudo-skill games and slot machines. As 'amusement centres' they linger on, but they're a flickering bitmap of their former selves.

THE NEXT MOVE

Do motion controllers hint at something similar happening to console games?

For all Wii's attractions, few would argue that nuanced gameplay is among them. Its success is built around sessions where you wave your arms in the air like you just don't care.

Better controllers may reign in that tendency – or they may simply shove more genres towards the fairground bracket. As for Project Natal, we will eventually see very interesting gameplay innovations arising from speech and vision control. But I'll wager it'll be decades before *FIFA* is as playable as with a joypad, if ever.

It goes without saying that I don't think conventional games are doomed. They didn't die with the arcades – they and their audience migrated to console. Games (as services) will always be available via computers and other devices, whatever form they take. Besides, I'm playing devil's advocate: I don't expect Microsoft to discontinue the 360 controllers (or plans for an Xbox 720, or whatever it is) anytime soon.

But the warning from arcades is clear. The more console manufacturers try to please everyone, the bigger the risk of satisfying no one. They abandon their roots for shallow, mass-market novelty fare at their peril.

Owain Bennallack is executive editor of *Develop*. He edited the magazine from its launch until its February 2006 issue. He has also worked at *MCV* and *Edge*, and has provided consultancy and evaluation services to several leading developers and publishers. He is also chairman of the Develop Conference advisory board.

18 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:09 Page 1

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS SPONSORED BY Bethesda SOFTWORKS

COMMENT: DESIGN

Co-operative Play

by Billy Thomson, Ruffian Games

Co-operative play is being talked about quite a lot these days. Games like *Halo*, *Gears of War* and even *Crackdown* led the way in this area and now some of the biggest solo games like *Call of Duty*, *Resident Evil* and *Dead Space* are also following suit and incorporating co-operative play into their future releases.

So, what does the notion of co-operative play actually mean?

A technical definition states that it is a form of play where players plan, assign roles and play together in an organised manner as they work towards a common goal.

Sounds like fun, but how do we as designers create a game that promotes this style of play?

Don't we as gamers all have a competitive streak running through our veins? We want to be the best player in the room – isn't that just human nature?

So how do we create a structure that will suppress that primal desire to be the top dog, sacrificing our personal goals to focus on the team objective? How do we produce team players in a competitive gaming world?

To be perfectly honest, I don't have the definitive answers to those questions, but I do have a few thoughts on what can be done to at least promote co-operative play.

> ***"You can create gaming moments that are better experienced with others, but I don't believe designers should ever enforce them."***

ENCOURAGING TEAM PLAY

The cheapest and most tried and tested method of encouraging co-operative play is to simply make the core objectives more difficult than they usually would be to achieve in a solo game. This generally causes players to approach objectives in a group and take on the defences as a team. The potential problem with this tactic is that you may turn off less skilled players who attempt to play the game alone.

Another new approach is to create team based Achievements that can only be completed when attempted by multiple players. I'd say these encourage rather than enforce, as they are not actually critical to progress through the game. They provide a nice incentive – Gamerpoints – to actually work together and play as a team. You all put something in and you all get something out. It's a near perfect balance to encourage players to play together.

ENFORCING TEAM PLAY

One of the easiest methods of pulling players together is to create multiple objectives that must be achieved at the same time in order to progress. It's a simple design solution to enforce co-operation between players but it is effective. The problem with this is you must have some way for players to play alone without being blocked by any team-based objectives. This is generally done by creating AI controlled characters that take on the roles that human players would normally perform. I don't mind this approach at all: it works well if the AI is as good as a human player, but it does mean that your development time is going to massively increase to get the AI spot on.

The other method that is occasionally used is to physically tether players together. So if a player goes too far from the others they are physically restrained from moving further away – or they are warped back to a place closer to their team mates. I'm not going to waste any more words on this method because, to be honest, I despise it!

PLAY NICE

One of the biggest challenges of co-operative play is stopping players from turning on each other.

You can physically stop them from attacking each other, turn on friendly fire, you can punish them by taking away points or you can send out AI controlled characters to hunt them down and kill them. Some of these break the consistency of the game mechanics, while others can ruin the feeling of realism, or feel like unnecessary and frustrating punishment for simply playing the game.

Crackdown pioneered various ideas for co-operative and competitive online play

On *Crackdown* we tried all of these methods and some worked better than others. Despite our best efforts we never really solved this problem.

Everybody we demoed *Crackdown* to would instantly race against each other to climb to the top of the highest building. When they finally got to the top and had stopped berating each other about who had won and who had cheated, they would take in the fantastic view across the rooftops. Then you could practically count on the fingers of one hand before one of them destroyed that magical moment by kicking the other clear off the rooftop to their inevitable death. Great fun to watch, but not really what you would call co-operative play.

In the end, I think you can try to create gaming moments that are better experienced with others, but I don't believe we as designers should ever enforce them. Players should be able to play the game however they see fit. Surely that's the beauty of gaming?

Billy Thomson is the creative director of newly-formed developer Ruffian Games. Billy has over 13 years experience of designing video games, including design roles on *Grand Theft Auto* and *GTA2*, before working as lead designer on Realtime Worlds' celebrated *Crackdown*.
www.ruffiangames.com

19 Dev96_final 23/6/09 10:50 Page 1

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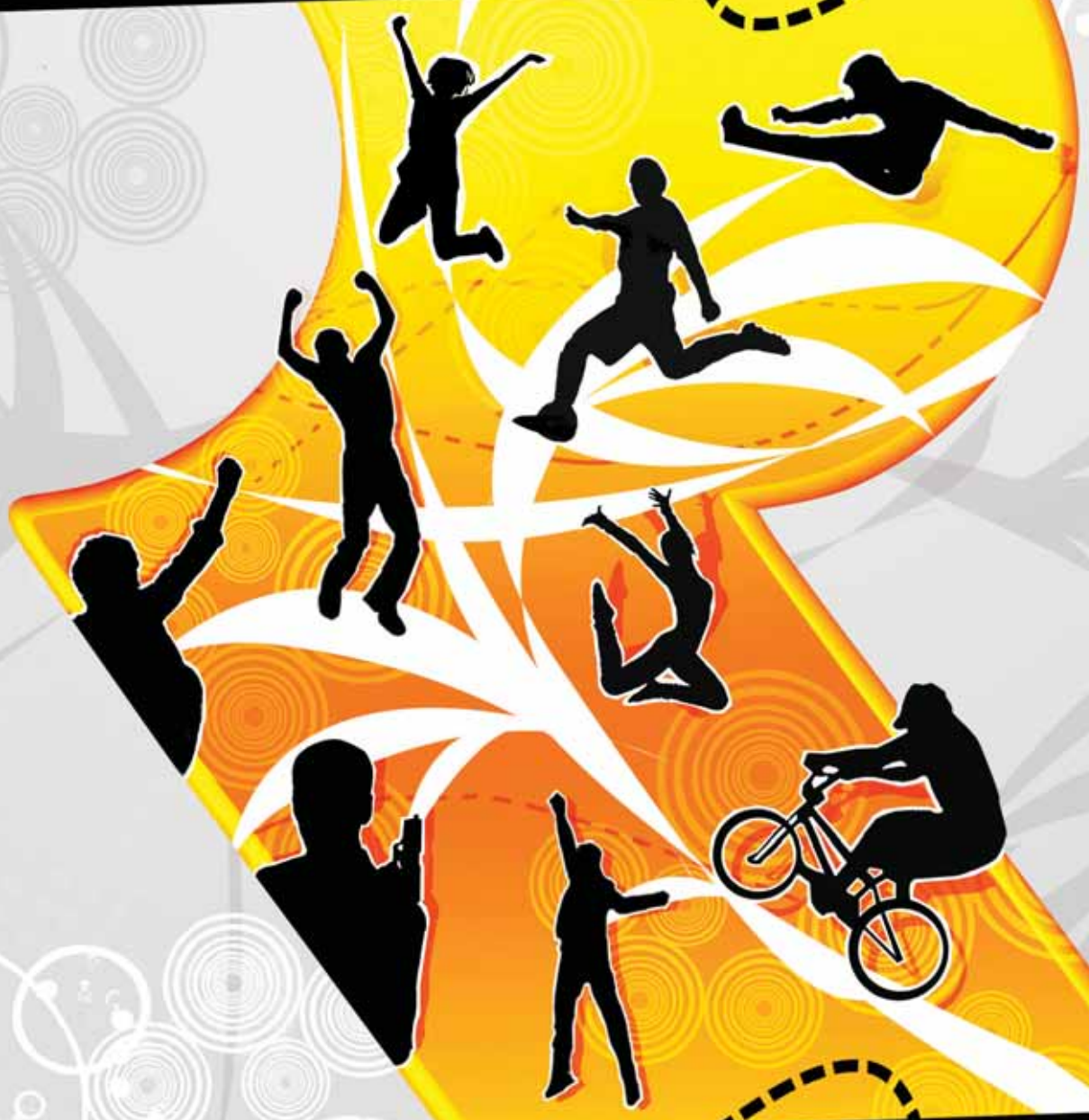

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There's a new direction in gaming and we're looking for designers to help Rare lead the way. Microsoft's Project Natal is all about controller-free gaming, changing the way that games are played by using the player as the controller. Rare is at the forefront of bringing Natal to life and is hard at work creating cool new experiences.

Your own experience in games design is not necessarily important. Neither are the roles you've had and games you've worked on. What we need is the ability to think differently, think ahead and challenge the rules of what an interactive experience can be.

This is a unique opportunity to shape your future, Rare's future and the future of gaming - so why not get in touch at **www.rare.co.uk?**

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Microsoft game studios

21 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:07 Page 1

COMMENT: CODING

Microsoft's new resolution

by David Jefferies, Black Rock Studio

Here at Black Rock we use 26-inch widescreen Sony Bravia LCD TVs. We chose these devices because they gave good image quality and were very popular; the theory being that we should develop games on hardware as similar as possible to that which our customers use.

This LCD model advertises its display format as 720p, but on closer inspection it's not 1280x720 like you'd expect. In actual fact, it's got a pixel resolution of 1366x768. Of course, LCD TVs can only display images at their native pixel resolution; if they try and display any other resolution then they need to first scale that image or letterbox it. The Bravias we use don't have the option to display letterbox through HDMI-A and, in any case, even if they did it's doubtful the consumer would know about it.

So, in order to display the 1280x720 output image from our game, the LCD must first use its hardware scaler to scale the image by 106.66 per cent in both axes. The lovingly crafted 1280x720 image has gone to be replaced by something dependent on the quality of the LCD scaler. But no matter how competent the scaler is, it's difficult to image how scaling by 106.66% could do any good to the image.

> ***"You can't trust your customer's display devices. That's not news, but now that problem is being exasperated by our desire to hit 720p."***

So what is it about 1366x768? There are millions of these LCDs out there but the resolution doesn't look familiar. It's not a power-of-two, it's not divisible by 640 and it's not even an exact 16:9 aspect ratio (although it is pretty close).

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

The best I've managed to come up with is that it's the highest resolution at nearly 16:9 that will fit into a megabyte boundary.

Microsoft has changed the TCR for screen resolution meaning developers can make better choices for upcoming titles

Multiply 1366 and 768 together and you get very nearly 1024x1024, or 1 megabyte. This means that the LCD manufacturers can use off-the-shelf video memory with very little wastage. On the other hand, if they were to use true 720p then they'd waste 13 per cent of the video memory and possibly lose sales to their rivals who could claim slightly higher resolutions.

So you can't trust your customer's display devices. That's not exactly news – that's been the case for as long as consoles have existed – but what's interesting is that this time the problem is being exasperated by our desire to hit 720p.

The first thing to note is that we all make trade-offs between image resolution and quality. Probably the most noticeable example of this is multi-sample anti-aliasing. Both hi-def consoles support either 4xMSAA, where the scene is anti-aliased vertically and horizontally, or 2xMSAA, where the scene is only anti-aliased vertically or horizontally. However, if you're throwing a lot of graphics around then you won't be able to afford 4XMSAA at 1280x720 because the GPU hit is just too great.

At this point most games, including our games here at Black Rock, drop down to 2xMSAA at 1280x720. We are making a trade-off and saying that the screen resolution is more important to us than the quality of the anti-aliasing. This isn't necessarily an entirely voluntary move because, until recently, Microsoft had a TCR insisting that games run at 1280x720 – providing you weren't one of the lucky ones like *Halo*, who got it waived and ran at 1152x640, that is.

By asserting that screen resolution is more important than anti-aliasing we're leaving ourselves vulnerable when the customer's LCD decides it's going to rescale the image to a new resolution anyway. If we instead assume that the LCD is going to rescale then, for some games, it might be more sensible to present it with a better anti-aliased but lower resolution image in the first place.

As more and more LCDs ship with the full HD resolution of 1920x1080 then this will become less of an issue, but I've just had a look on Amazon and all the 26" and 32" Sony and Samsung TVs are still 1366x768.

It's is for this reason that Microsoft recently retired the TCR insisting on 1280x720. Now we are free to make the trade-off between resolution and image quality as we see fit.

David Jefferies started in the industry at Psygnosis in Liverpool in 1995, eventually working on *Global Domination* and *WipEout 3*. He later moved to Rare where he worked on the *Perfect Dark* and *Donkey Kong* franchises. Next came a move down to Brighton to join Black Rock Studio (which was then known as Climax Racing) in 2003. On this generation of consoles he's been the technical director of *MotoGP'06* and *MotoGP'07* before starting work on new racer *Split/Second*.
www.blackrockstudio.com

22-23 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:37 Page 1

Continental Drift

As GDC Europe draws close, **Develop** brings you a guide to all the essential information and a pick of the best sessions at the conference…

The Keynotes

THE FUTURE OF GAMING GRAPHICS

Cevat Yerli, CEO and president, Crytek

Crytek's founder will look to the future of graphics, and the potential for increased immersion as faster processors and new rendering techniques become available.

DATE: Monday, August 17th, 11:20am-12:10pm

CREATING IP THE REMEDY WAY

Matias Myllyrinne, managing director, Remedy

Drawing on experience creating Max Payne and Alan Wake, Myllyrinne will offer insights into Remedy's creative principles, and discuss ways European boutique publishers can better succeed.

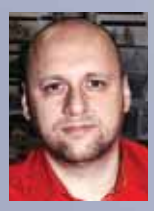
DATE: Monday, August 17th, 3:20-4:10pm

CCP: WINNING THE WAR

Hilmar Veigar Pétursson, CEO, CCP

The CCP CEO talks over his experience climbing from relative obscurity to being a major MMO company. As well as looking to the past, Pétursson will reveal exclusive insights into CCP's future plans.

DATE: Tuesday, August 18th, 11:20am-12:10pm



WRITING NARRATIVE FOR A MATURE AUDIENCE

David Cage, CEO and founder, Quantic Dream

Cage will address his thoughts about mature games, why they are necessary, why interactive storytelling is a valid answer, the difficulties that are on the way and what solutions can be found.

DATE: Tuesday, August 18th, 3:20pm-4:10pm

CHANGES IN THE GAMES INDUSTRY

Klaas Kersting, CEO, Gameforge

Kersting will address the advantages of different payment models, and share his opinions on free-to-play models. The CEO will also look at the differences between Europe and Asia.

DATE: Wednesday, August 19th, 11:20am-12:10pm

22-23 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:37 Page 2

THE BEST SESSIONS

Got a packed schedule for Germany? If so we've put together a guide to the must-see sessions at this year's GDC Europe…

TRIPLE-A OR BUST!
Speaker: Paul Wedgwood (Owner and lead designer, Splash Damage)
Date/Time: Monday, August 17th, 10:10am-11:00am
Track: Business & Management
Experience Level: All

BATTLE-TESTED DEFERRED RENDERING ON PS3, XBOX 360 AND PC
Speaker: Tibor Klajnscek (Technical director, ZootFly)
Date/Time: Monday, August 17th, 11:20am-12:10pm
Track: Programming
Experience Level: Intermediate

DESIGNING WOMEN
Speaker: Margaret Wallace (Co-founder and CEO, Rebel Monkey, Inc.), Tracy Fullerton (Associate professor, USC Interactive Media), Sheri Graner Ray (Senior game designer, Schell Games), Kellee Santiago (President and co-founder, thatgamecompany, LLC), Cynthia Woll (Founder and CEO, Cul de Sac Studios)
Date/Time: Tuesday, August 18th, 11:20am-12:10pm
Track: Game Design
Experience Level: All

MUSING ABOUT CLOUDS: HOW CLOUD TECHNOLOGY WILL AFFECT GAME DEVELOPERS AND THE GAMES INDUSTRY
Speaker: Denis Dyack (President, Silicon Knights)
Date/Time: Monday, August 17th, 1:00pm-1:50pm
Track: Business & Management
Experience Level: All

SPECING OUT TRIPLE-A ART DEVELOPMENT: KNOW THE HELL YOU'RE GETTING INTO!
Speaker: Stefan Baier (Co-founder and pipeline architect, Streamline Studios), Renier Banninga (Co-founder and studio art director, Streamline Studios)
Date/Time: Tuesday, August 17th, 9:00am-9:50am
Track: Visual Arts
Experience Level: Intermediate

GAMES IN STEREOSCOPIC 3D – THE NEXT DIMENSION IS FINALLY HERE?
Speaker: Andrew Oliver (CTO, Blitz Games), Aaron Allport (R&D manager, Blitz Games)
Date/Time: Tuesday, August 18th, 9:00am-9:50am
Track: Business & Management
Experience Level: All

Q&A: Event Director Frank Swilka

What differs this year's event from previous GDC Europe conferences?
Our guiding principle has been to create a conference that addresses the unique issues facing the European game development community like no event has done before. In just the keynotes alone, you see that we have speakers from Iceland, Sweden, France and Germany. We have made a concerted effort to bring people and companies that are interested in doing business in Europe. So you will see representatives from the business development departments of companies including Microsoft, Capcom, Disney, Paramount, DDM, Strategic Alternatives and more.

This year we are also looking to shape some new tools which we would like to expand over the next years. For instance, we're organising workshops for representatives from the film industry and the games industry where they can sit down and talk about character design, interactive opportunities in movies and games, story telling and other issues relevant to both. We're also organising meetings with executives for digital distribution and online gaming. We, of course, are also developing sessions for students interested in moving into game development.

What distinguishes GDC Europe from the other GDCs?
Each of the global Game Developers Conferences are designed and programmed to serve the needs of their immediate communities. GDC Europe keenly investigates the current technologies and business opportunities throughout Europe today. For example, the conference will play special attention to online games – their design, production, and business models in Europe. Also we are looking to help create new business opportunities for European developers with other regions – North America and Asia. One particularly important topic is to help expand the collaboration between European developers. Maybe, by working together, they can expand their businesses or find ways to save money by working together. We've also given the associations that serve the European game development community the opportunity to have a presence at GDC Europe.

What does Cologne offer GDC Europe as a host city?
Cologne is one of Europe's, and certainly one of Germany's, most fun cities. Aside from the city's ease of reach via plane and train, Cologne offers an exciting nightlife as well as several day-time activities including sites, museums, performing arts, and shopping along cobblestone streets. GDC Europe attendees will definitely fall in love with Cologne by the end of the conference. And in Cologne you can enjoy Koelsch!

Finally, what is it that GDC offers that no other European industry event provides?
It is the ultimate showcase for Europe; the conference should provide the most comprehensive overview of the European Games Industry, whereas I feel that most other events are more focused on their specific regions. It will provide a uniquely European perspective and serve as a coming together of game development leadership from all over the continent.

24 Dev97_final 28/7/09 10:09 Page 1

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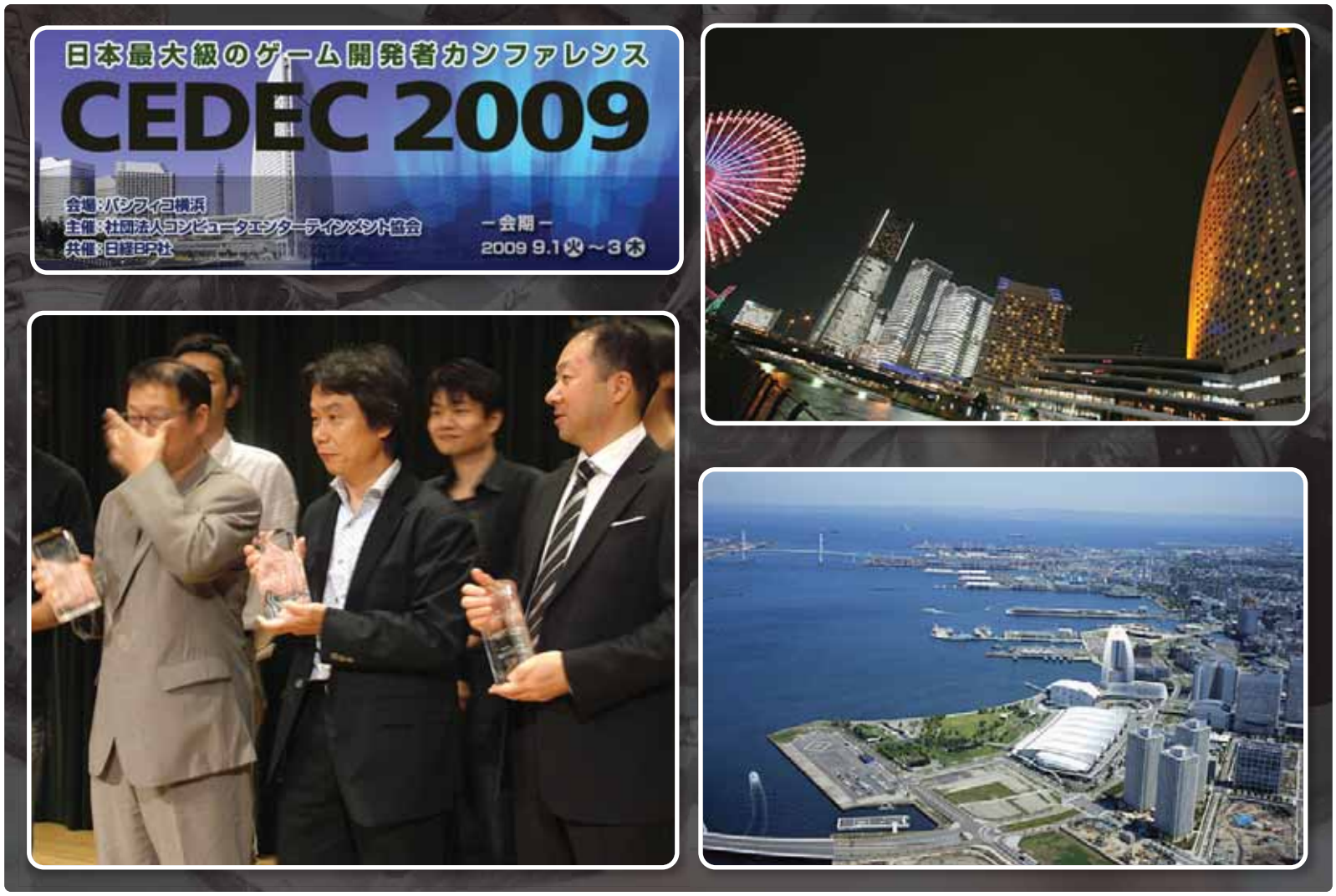
PSP Programmer
PS3 Programmer
XBox 360 Programmer
Security Programmer
Editor Developer
Asset Server Developer
Technical Writer
Forum/Community Developer
Website Content Developer
System Administrator
AI Programmer

25 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:15 Page 1

The CEDEC Diaries

In the first of a series of occasional columns about CEDEC, Japan's answer to GDC, advisory board chair and chief technologist at Square Enix's R&D division **Naoto Yoshioka** shares the origins of the event…



Fancy escaping to the beautiful sights and scorching sun of Yokohama this summer? Silly question.

IN JAPAN, WE HAVE a games industry body called Computer Entertainment Supplier's Association, or CESA. Most of the Japanese game developers, publishers and platform holders participate in the group, and we seek to help push the games industry forward by holding events like the Tokyo Game Show and discussing issues such as game ratings.

Within CESA, there's also a group called the Technology Committee, whose primary role is to organise the CESA Developers Conference, or CEDEC. This year's CEDEC will be the 11th time the event has been held.

The original idea for CEDEC came about from a Mr. Kawanishi, who saw how professional game developers came together to hone their craft at the Game Developers Conference. At that time, he was working as a DirectX evangelist for Microsoft Japan. Through his work, he saw that Japanese developers were doing excellent work individually, but that there were very few chances for them to come together and share information. Japanese developers possessed wonderful skills, he felt, but there were no chances to share those with other studios within the country, let alone internationally. From a global standpoint, it was a wasteful situation. And so he gathered together people well-versed in cutting-edge techniques, and those who held an interest in the expansion of the industry, and formed the advisory board.

> ***"If you're planning on coming to Japan for the Tokyo Game Show, we'd love it if you extended your stay a little and came along to CEDEC."***

As a result of this, many of those board members have become people in their organisations who are responsible for skill development. Naturally, these are people who put in a huge amount of effort alongside their normal work, without any financial reward. Yet each year they have the huge task of deciding each year's theme, inviting those games industry luminaries familiar with that theme to speak, and helping to make CEDEC achieve its full potential. Their motivation is to encourage and support the Japanese games industry from a technical standpoint. In the end, it's simply that they want to deliver enjoyable games to the people of the world.

At last year's CEDEC, almost 2,000 game developers attended. Our aim was to make the event more international, and to that end we had speakers such as Epic's Tim Sweeney and Bungie's Steve Theodore. In addition, we also had Shigeru Miyamoto and Capcom's Kenji Inafune presenting keynotes, and both delivered passionate speeches to the assembled game professionals.

This year, we're putting some major changes in place for CEDEC, and planning to elevate the social position of the games industry. CEDEC 2009 takes place from September 1st to 3rd in Yokohama, which is just next to Tokyo. It's held a little bit before Tokyo Game Show, so if you're planning on coming to Japan for TGS we'd love it if you extended your stay a little and came along to CEDEC too. We're positive that seeing Japanese developers exchange ideas will prove to be an exciting experience.
cedec.cesa.or.jp/en_index.html

26-27 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:29 Page 1

Introducing **develop-online.net**

Last month we relaunched our leading games development trade site with a brand new look – and a new URL. Here, we offer everything you need to know about Develop's new home on the web…

BLOGS

As well as our leading features page, *Develop* now has its own blog section. It offers opinions from *Develop* staff and our regular magazine columnists' contributions – but games industry members are also able to submit their own blogs. We have industry contributors lined up to start offering their views and development diaries, but the door is open for more.

If you have something you want to get off your chest, a debate you want to raise, or are looking for somewhere to discuss what your company is up to, the *Develop* blog is the ideal place to do so. Contact **rob.crossley@intentmedia.co.uk** to get involved.

NETWORKING AND EVENTS

From the Develop Conference to GDC Canada to E3, here you'll find the best info on key games industry events and networking opportunities.

Full details, from dates to attendees to agenda, can be found in each listing. If you want your trade event on our comprehensive list, contact **will.freeman@intentmedia.co.uk**

NEWS

The *Develop* team post breaking news, announcements and commentary every day. Be it new tech licensees to studio acquisitions – we cover every story that matters to games development.

There's a multitude of ways to get this content, from our RSS feed, Twitter, or our Daily Digest newsletter.

We also have Newsflashes for the stories that just can't wait.

And if you've been out of the loop for a few days the best place to go is *Develop*'s news tab. Here, we have an archive of stories, which lists news by the day, offers access to *Develop*'s entire album of news reports, and lists our most popular stories.

Users can also submit tips to us – off the record by default – and also send over announcements and press releases.

Develop also boasts a news feed section which highlights stories found on other industry sites too.

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk
Ed.Fear@intentmedia.co.uk
Rob.Crossley@intentmedia.co.uk
Will.Freeman@intentmedia.co.uk

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk
Sam.Robinson@intentmedia.co.uk

26-27 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:29 Page 2

DIRECTORY

Develop also boasts a directory listing the core game studios, dev tool companies and academic institutions and services. Each listing provides contact details and a full profile explaining the company's history and what it can offer peers and partners. If you're interested in putting your company on *Develop*'s global stage, contact **sam.robinson@intentmedia.co.uk**

FEATURES

Every day the *Develop* team posts new features up to the site to complement our regular news updates. These are a mix of features from the print edition you're reading right now plus reams of original content. Interviews with leading developers and studio heads, news analysis, company profiles, technology updates and sector guides – it's all here.

JOBS

If you're considering a career move, *Develop* is the place to start looking. The *Develop* Jobs Board is filled with positions, updated daily, and features an exhaustive range of companies. To advertise vacancies on the our leading game developer website, contact **katie.rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk**

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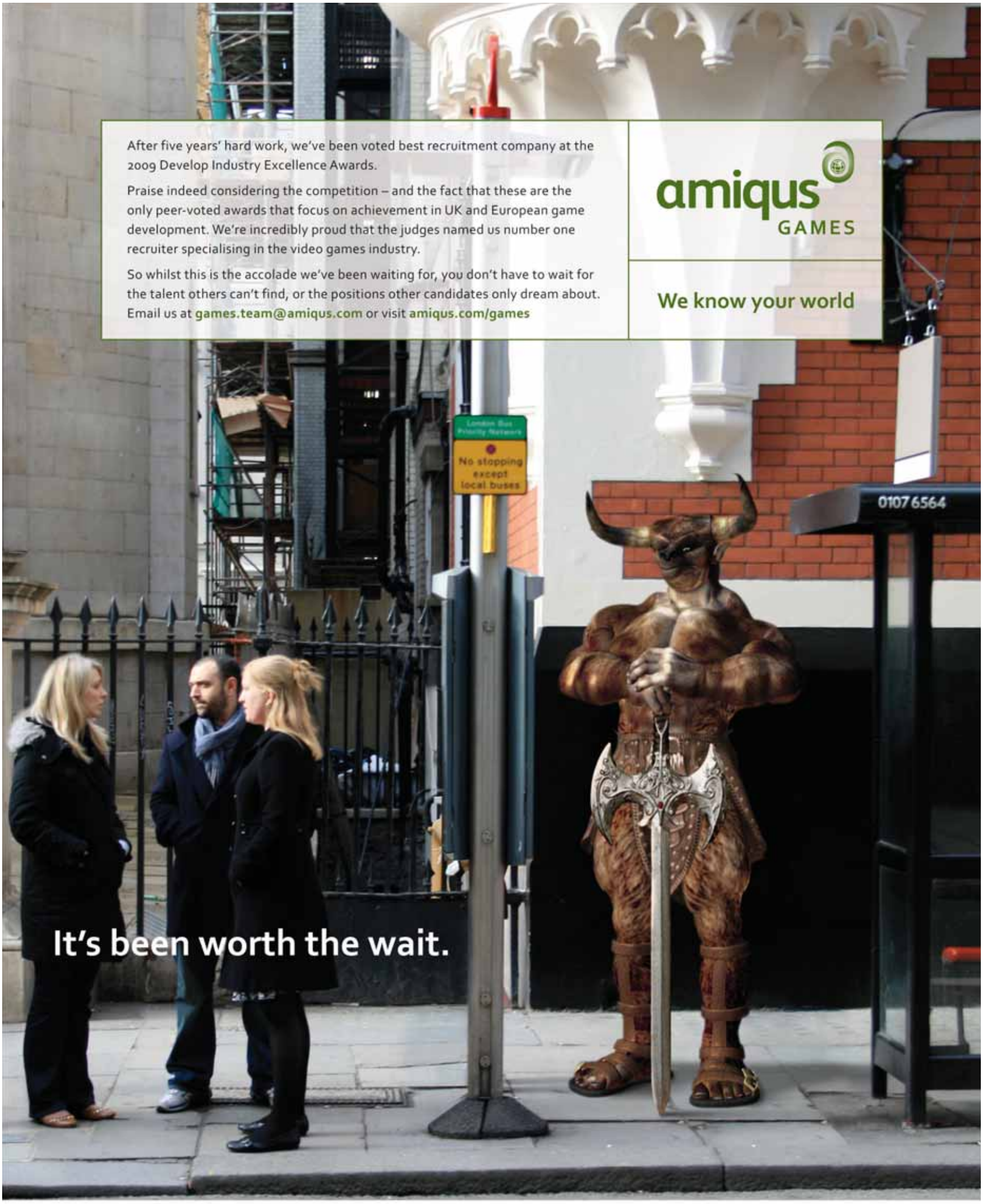
24 Dev98_final 27/7/09 10:20 Page 1



After five years' hard work, we've been voted best recruitment company at the 2009 Develop Industry Excellence Awards.

Praise indeed considering the competition – and the fact that these are the only peer-voted awards that focus on achievement in UK and European game development. We're incredibly proud that the judges named us number one recruiter specialising in the video games industry.

So whilst this is the accolade we've been waiting for, you don't have to wait for the talent others can't find, or the positions other candidates only dream about. Email us at **games.team@amiqus.com** or visit **amiqus.com/games**

amiqus GAMES

We know your world

It's been worth the wait.

develop INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNER '09

29 Dev97_final 30/7/09 16:53 Page 1

BETA

DEVELOPMENT FEATURES, INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS & MORE

"New studios in Scotland have remained fiercely independent and far more experimental..."
Brian Baglow, p38

Grand Prix winner Codemasters
p36

Scotland's game industry profiled
p38

Gaming's next Government challenges
p48

Media Darlings

The LittleBigPlanet team cleaned up at the Develop Awards, taking home five prizes. Turn the page for a full review in pictures...

30-34 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:47 Page 1

And the Winners are...

Last month **Develop** acknowledged the bright stars of games development at our yearly Industry Excellence Awards. Here we offer you a run down of the winners and highlights from the night…

SONY'S STARS

Media Molecule, and key execs from Sony past and present (including the Sony XDev team, studios boss Shuhei Yoshida, studios VP Michael Denny and former studios president Phil Harrison) were on hand to collect the big prizes

THE JUDGES

84 people voted on this year's awards and Develop is very grateful for all their support. They are:

Alan Yu (Ngmoco), **Ben Board** (Xbox), **Ben Cousins** (EA DICE), **Billy Thomson** (Ruffian Games), **Bradley Crooks** (Headstrong Games), **Charles Cecil** (Revolution), **Chris Lee** (FreeStyle Games), **Clemens Wangerin** (SCEE Liverpool), **Colin MacDonald** (Realtime Worlds), **Craig Duncan** (Midway Newcastle), **Darryl Still** (1C), **David Amor** (Relentless), **David Braben** (Frontier), **Ed Daly** (Zoe Mode), **Ed Fear** (Develop), **Fergus McGovern** (HotGen), **Gareth Edmonson** (Ubisoft Reflections), **Gary Penn** (Denki), **Gavin Cheshire** (Codemasters), **Gordon Hall** (Rockstar Leeds), **Harvey Elliott** (EA Bright Light), **Ian Goodall** (Aardvark Swift), **Ian Livingstone** (Eidos), **Iris Ludolf** (Partnertrans), **James Brooksby** (Doublesix), **James Shepherd** (SCEE Cambridge), **Jamie Sefton** (Screen Yorkshire), **Jason Perkins** (Curve), **Jim Purbrick** (Linden Labs), **John Broomhall** (John Broomhall Projects), **John Chasey** (Finblade), **Jon Burton** (Traveller's Tales), **Jonathan Smith** (TT Games), **Karl Hilton** (Crytek UK), **Kieran Connell** (Microsoft), **Kristian Segerstrale** (Playfish), **Liz Prince** (Amiqus), **Mark Gerhard** (Jagex), **Mark Healey** (Media Molecule), **Mark Rein** (Epic Games), **Martin de Ronde** (One Big Game), **Martin Hollis** (Zoonami), **Martyn Brown** (Team 17), **Michael Denny** (SCEE), **Michael French** (Develop), **Mick Morris** (Audiomotion), **Mike Drummelsmith** (Quazal), **Mike Haigh** (SCEE London Studio), **Miles Jacobson** (Sports Interactive), **Neil Poselthwaite** (Endrant), **Owain Bennallack** (Develop), **Patric Palm** (Hansoft), **Patrick O'Luaniagh** (nDreams), **Patrick Soderland** (EA), **Paul Farley** (Tag Games), **Paul Holman** (SCEE), **Paul Mayze** (Monumental), **Paul Wedgewood** (Splash Damage), **Phil Harrison** (Atari/independent), **Rich Keen** (IGN/Direct2Drive), **Richard Jacques** (Richard Jacques Studios), **Richard Wilson** (Tiga), **Rick Gibson** (Games Investor), **Rob Crossley** (Develop), **Robert Nyberg** (Starbreeze Studios), **Roy Meredith** (Beautiful Game Studios), **Samuli Syvähuoko** (Recoil Games), **Sarah Chudley** (Bizarre Creations), **Sebastian Wloch** (Asobo), **Simon Byron** (BHPR), **Simon Farmer** (Rare), **Simon Oliver** (HandCircus), **Simon Prytherch** (Lightning Fish Games), **Siobhan Reddy** (Media Molecule), **Stuart Dinsey** (Intent Media), **Tim Closs** (Ideaworks3D), **Tim Rogers** (Eurocom), **Tony Beckwith** (Black Rock Studio), **Torsten Reil** (NaturalMotion), **Vincent Scheurer** (Sarassin), **Will Freeman** (Develop), **William Latham** (Games Audit)

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30-34 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:47 Page 2

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

GRAND PRIX | **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT** | DEVELOPMENT LEGEND

GRAND PRIX
Codemasters

"There are too many people to thank. I don't know where to start. I'm very proud and honoured. It's not my award – it's for the whole company."

Trevor Williams

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
Jacqui Lyons

"I'm truly honoured. I'm very pleased, and very proud to be part of this industry. Thank you all very much."

DEVELOPMENT LEGEND
Phil Harrison

"Thanks very much to everybody at Develop. If my son, when he grows up, gets to be in an industry that is as brilliant and fun and talented as this one, I'll be very pleased."

30-34 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:48 Page 3

develop
INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

CREATIVITY

BEST NEW IP | **BEST USE OF A LICENCE** | VISUAL ARTS | **PUBLISHING HERO** | AUDIO ACCOMPLISHMENT

BEST NEW IP

LittleBigPlanet (Media Molecule)

"This is an amazing award, and personally I'm really excited. I'd really like to thank all of Media Molecule. I'm really proud to have worked with you all on this game."

Pete Smith

BEST USE OF A LICENCE

Lego Batman (Traveller's Tales)

"Thanks so much and thanks to the team at Traveller's Tales, who do it time and time again."

Jonathan Smith

PUBLISHING HERO

Apple

"On behalf of Ngmoco and all the other partners, all involved, thank you to Steve Jobs and all at Apple."

Alan Yu, Ngmoco – collecting on Apple's behalf

VISUAL ARTS

LittleBigPlanet (Media Molecule)

"It's a great honour to be even nominated for working on this game. Thanks so very much everyone."

Kareem Ettouney

AUDIO ACCOMPLISHMENT

Fable II (Lionhead)

"Thanks so much. Thank you to the 140 people that worked on the audio, and thanks to the whole team, who are all amazing."

Georg Backer

30-34 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:49 Page 4

TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES

TECHNICAL INNOVATION | **BEST TOOLS PROVIDER** | CREATIVE OUTSOURCING | **BEST ENGINE** | RECRUITMENT COMPANY | **SERVICES**

TECHNICAL INNOVATION
LittleBigPlanet (Media Molecule)

"This is of course on behalf of the programmers, more than anyone else. I don't do tech as it makes my head hurt, so to those guys, thank you very much."

Mark Healey

BEST TOOLS PROVIDER
Autodesk

"This is a huge surprise, and I just want to say thank you to everyone at Autodesk for their work towards this."

Tim Doidge

CREATIVE OUTSOURCING
Side & Sidelines

"We've all worked very hard for this for the past few months and we all feel very passionate about the projects you've trusted us with, so thank you all so much."

Andy Emery

BEST ENGINE
Unreal Engine 3 (Epic Games)

"I want to thank all the guys on the UE3 team, and all our customers for making us look so good."

Mark Rein

RECRUITMENT COMPANY
Amiqus

"We're really quite excited because we've been nominated so many times. Thanks so, so much for this."

Liz Prince

SERVICES
Audiomotion

"Thank you. This is for all our clients out there, all our publishers, all our developers, and everyone else who's helped us."

Mick Morris

30-34 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:49 Page 5

STUDIOS

BEST IN-HOUSE TEAM | **BEST NEW STUDIO** | BEST HANDHELD GAMES STUDIO | **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** | BEST INDEPENDENT DEVELOPER

BEST IN-HOUSE TEAM
Rockstar North

"Gay Tony and everyone is working very hard, so thank you very much for this."

Lucien King

BEST HANDHELD GAMES STUDIO
Rockstar Leeds

"This award would never have come to us if it weren't for the efforts of the entire Rockstar family. We've got friends in New York, San Diego and mostly up North."

Ian Bowden

BEST NEW STUDIO
Media Molecule

"This one is something to smile about.
Someone once said fortune favours the brave, and we would like to thank everyone who had faith in us."

Siobhan Reddy

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Playfish

"Thanks everyone. We specialise in Facebook games, so thanks to everyone who plays Facebook games."

Steven Shipton

BEST INDEPENDENT DEVELOPER
Media Molecule

"A lot of people took a big bet on us. Especially Sony, who dedicated a huge amount to us."

Chris Lee

35 Dev97_final 30/7/09 19:01 Page 1

Autodesk®

A heartfelt thank you for voting Autodesk Best Tools Provider at the Develop Industry Excellence Awards 2009.

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36-37 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:03 Page 1

Head 'Master

After its Grand Prix win at the Develop Awards, **Ed Fear** pinned down Codemasters Studios' vice president and general manager Gavin Cheshire to discuss the firm's successes, its acquisitions plan, surviving in the recession and European development strategy…

Congratulations on the Grand Prix win – we feel that it encompasses Codemasters' achievements and dedication to UK and European development, both internally and externally, over the past couple of years. If you had to pick some particular achievements from the last five years, what are you are most proud of?
We're all very honoured to receive the award. It's been a lot of hard work and effort for everyone at Codemasters.

I guess our greatest achievement has been reinventing our business to take advantage of the ever changing landscape that is development today. With *DiRT*, *GRID* and *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* we've turned tired IPs into multi-award winning, reinvigorated and successful franchises. With the EGO Engine, we've created an award-winning, multi genre, multi format technology. We've grown our business and continued to attract the best and the brightest and after all that, we're still here, 23 years later.

Your Guildford studio is working on not one but two new IPs, at a time when many people are cautious of such risks – do you think that commitment to new franchises is important at times like this?
Codemasters has always been about great games and great IP, so nothing has really changed on that front. IP is our life blood and if we're sensible about how we approach that we can be successful.

Operation Flashpoint has seen its fair share of delays in order to perfect it – is that something that you're not afraid to do to make sure the games are released when they're ready?
The hardest thing to do in the current climate is to miss a street date, but everyone has to face it every now and again. Not getting *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* right is worse though: the franchise is incredibly strong and we wanted to make sure it started right and could grow in the future.

> ***"We're not immune to the issues affecting the rest of the world right now. We've made some small restructures internally, but generally our development side is unaffected."***

Codemasters recently acquired Swordfish Studios – how does that sit within the organisation? What in particular attracted the company to the studio?
Swordfish is a strong, well run team with solid pedigree. They have been capable of turning their hands to almost anything and creating solid results. What we did was look at where we could take a studio like that over time, so we've added our technology into the mix and started with a solid IP. They have a real burning desire and their location worked for us.

You've been growing your internal development efforts, through the purchase of Swordfish and expansion in Guildford – do you see that as being more important to you than external development?
Any kind of development, whether internal or external, is always a challenge. We have greater control over every detail internally than we can ever do externally, but there are only so many internal teams you can have. What we're doing is getting the balance right. External development is still important to our business and we continue to look for the best development talent we can find.

EGO was a huge investment for you – is it paying off yet?
There are many ways to look at this one. I guess on the one hand we've won countless awards and accolades for the games that use it and for the technology itself. On the other hand it allows us to be as good as we can be. There will always be limits if you have to rely on someone else's technology and supply thereof. We can't afford to be limited if want to compete.

Sumo are helping with the development of F1 '09 whereas '10 is being developed in-house – is there any collaboration? Is this alternate release pattern something you plan to continue?
When we took on the Formula One license, we were clear that we would not compromise our desire to create the very best game we could. The F1 games of late were getting a bit tired and we knew we could do better. What we couldn't do is turn one around in 12

36-37 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:04 Page 2

months. So we've created a plan using Sumo's very excellent and talented development teams to help us provide a route to getting a great *F1 2009* season game on Wii and PSP, followed in the 2010 season with PS3, Xbox 360 and PC. Our teams have provided input into this season's game at various levels and over time we can grow the franchise both in the amount of formats and the scope of the game. The ideas are endless. What we do end up with though is a game for next year developed from our internal teams that will have had a lot longer than 12 months in development.

How have you reacted to the recession in terms of development – are you finding yourself more frugal on hiring new staff, for example?
We're not immune to the issues affecting the rest of the world right now. We've made some small scale restructures within our group as a whole but generally our development side is unaffected. That's not to say we're not being more cautious, though – I can pretty much rule out any more acquisitions for the foreseeable.

Are there things about the organisation of Codemasters that you feel makes you strong in the recession?
Some of the most talented and creatively brilliant development teams in the world. You can do anything well if you have great people around you.

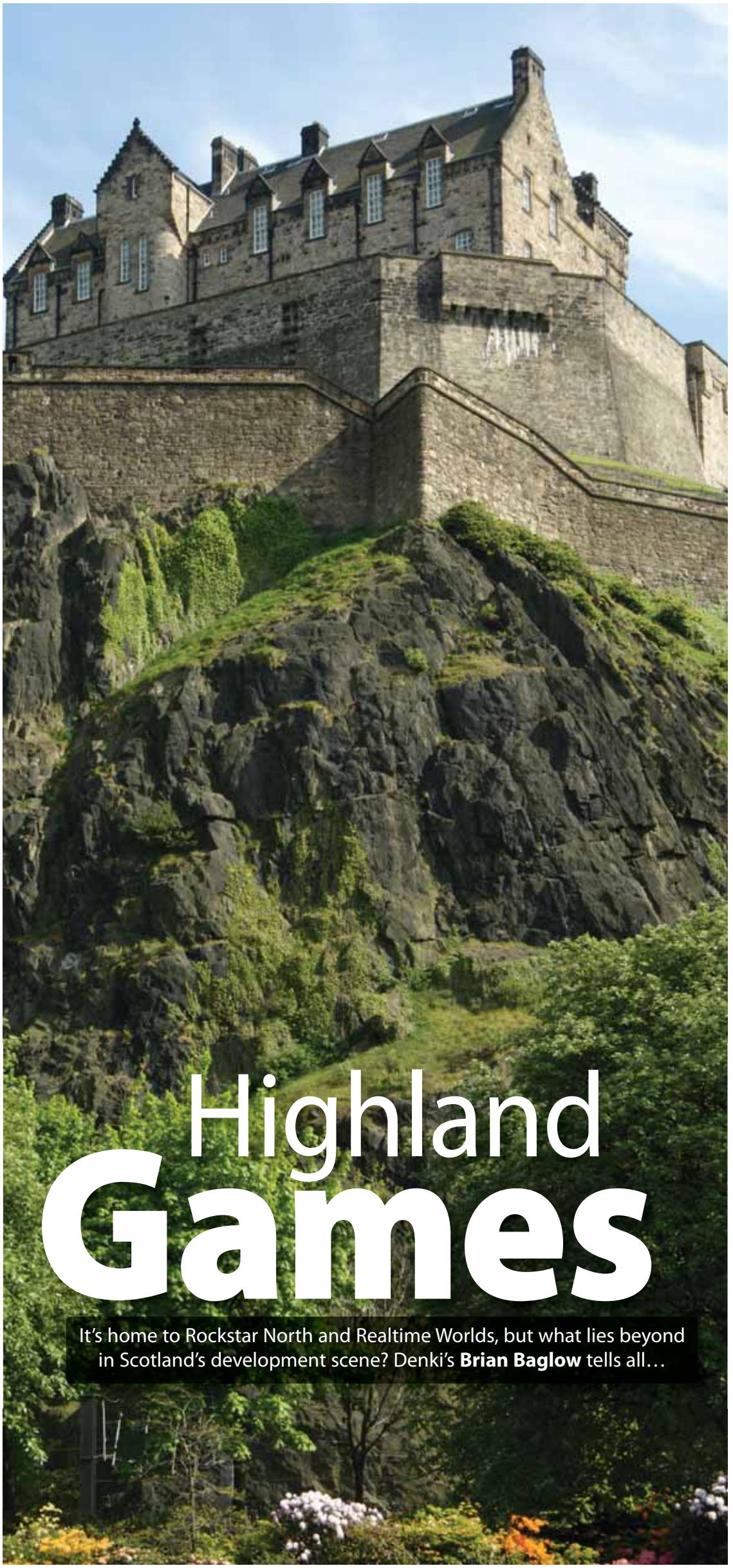
What do you hope the studio can achieve in the next five years?
Grow our current and future franchises to extraordinary heights.

You've got your own outsourcing operation in Malaysia. Are you finding that having your own operation out there is more efficient, if a big investment?
It's been a profitable entity in its own right since we started, so it's actually very cost efficient for us. It's also provided us with a finance capability for our developments as well as allowing us to train and grow our own talent for our own games. With little or no gaming experience in Malaysia, Codemasters has done a great deal in that region to change that perception and we've also moved on now from art to programming as well. All of it takes time, however, and lots of work from both the UK and Kuala Lumpur teams.

Would you ever consider letting that studio develop its own projects?
In the long term, the answer is definitely yes. But again, we'd have to grow it slowly and get the experience right.
www.codemasters.com

Cheshire oversees a studio operation across four sites and over 200 staff at Codemasters – the firm won the Develop Awards Grand Prix last month

38-39 Dev97_final 29/7/09 15:41 Page 1



Highland Games

It's home to Rockstar North and Realtime Worlds, but what lies beyond in Scotland's development scene? Denki's **Brian Baglow** tells all…

Scotland is somewhat misunderstood when it comes to video games. The company has two huge, massively successful studios – Rockstar North and Realtime Worlds – plus many smaller, innovative studios working in new areas.

Yet if you ask most people about the business of making games in Scotland, they look at you blankly and maybe mutter something about *Grand Theft Auto*.

The country did suffer from a number of very high profile casualties over the last several years. All of the major studios who represented the vast majority of the industry in the mid-'90s no longer exist. Only Rockstar, built upon the foundations of DMA Design and now owned by Take-Two, remains in anything like its original form, albeit hugely expanded and highly focused on one or two core properties.

However, the people who worked with DMA, Vis, Visual Science, Red Lemon, Inner Workings or Creative Edge didn't leave the industry, or go and find jobs in the lucrative banking sector (a few misguided fools apart). Many of them stayed in Scotland, stayed in the games business and started again. Rather than repeat the same formula which drove the larger studios out of business, the new studios have remained fiercely independent, much smaller, tighter, more focused and far more experimental.

WEE SPORTS

It's fair to say that investment is a little more 'difficult' here in Scotland. Publishers treated a trip to Edinburgh like a week in the Arctic Circle and still don't know where Dundee is in relation to say, Helsinki or Santiago. So the smaller studios ignored the received wisdom of the industry – that console games are the only true games, budgets start at $10m, and publishers are the source of all which is good – and struck out in directions which did not require the same levels of funding, hoop jumping and publisher geography.

The one unifying aspect of the new generation of development studios in Scotland has been a willingness to explore new technologies, new platforms, new business models and new audiences. Companies looking at casual gaming, mobile gaming, the iPhone, social networks, MMOs and digital distribution were all found north of the border very early in their existence.

Hence, much of the innovation and success from Scottish companies hasn't been picked up on, because it's been out on the crazy fringes of 'real' gaming and 'not really suitable for our readers'. It's also not helped that most Scottish companies are so damnably modest that they're unwilling to cause a fuss with something as brash as a press release.

So, you rarely hear about the new things, the innovation, the deals, the big partnerships or the awesome new games from companies up here. Which is a shame, because there's a huge amount to celebrate.

Quietly, and without much fuss, Scottish companies have been leading the way in areas like digital distribution – Outerlight

38-39 Dev97_final 29/7/09 15:41 Page 2

Plenty of games IP new and old has hailed from Scotland, including some famed development teams

originally released *The Ship* in 2004. Mobile gaming, too: The Games Kitchen was creating games in 2000 and Digital Bridges was one of the world's first dedicated mobile games publishers. Even casual gaming: Denki has been releasing 'casual' games since 2000, with its 180 games going into nine million homes across the UK, thanks to a deal with SKY TV. Cobra and Slam both created casual games portals, to provide direct-to-consumer distribution back in 2005/6.

The creation of the iPhone App Store marked a huge new opportunity for developers and in the last 14 months many studios have started building highly successful content for Apple's shiny new 'games platform', including 4J, Electric Tophat, Dynamo, Tag, Cobra and Digital Goldfish. Proper Games and Triple B have both also released games on Xbox Live Arcade, while Cohort has been quietly releasing PlayStation Network and PS3 games to general rejoicing.

BIOJOCK

There are currently over 30 developers and development studios across the country, working on every conceivable platform. Then of course, there are the other projects and events you might not have come across yet.

The Dare to be Digital competition is quite simply astonishing, for example. If you've not come across it before, Dare to be Digital is a competition for students. Teams of five are challenged to create original new games and ten weeks on the platform of their choice. They then have to present the games to the public over three days during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August.

The teams submit their own concepts, or pick one from a pool of ideas submitted by consumers. They present to a panel of judges from within the industry who pick the best teams and treatments. The successful teams then get ten weeks at Abertay University in Dundee, a budget and a living allowance.

Think about this for a minute. It's finding new talent, creating new IP and showing the teams exactly what it's like working within the games industry. This should be the games industry's Olympics, World Cup and *Big Brother* all rolled into one. It should generate new games and spark bidding wars over winning teams. BAFTA – yes, BAFTA – created a new award for teams coming through Dare, the 'Ones To Watch' award. Seriously, how often do they knock together new awards for some random competition?

And Abertay is just one of many Scottish universities looking at games – Glasgow Caledonian hosted the 2009 Global Games Jam in Scotland, the University of West Scotland has a superb range of courses and even the Screen Academy at Napier now introduces film production and screen writing students to interactive entertainment.

Games, it would seem, are finally being taken seriously. The Scottish Government is backing Dare financially and publicly. MSPs are asking questions in parliament about tax breaks for games and – for the first time ever – offering public support to studios.

The commercial organisations – Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International have been firmly behind the games sector for the last decade. The famous Scottish Games Alliance parties at E3 were down to SDI, while almost every games related company which has started up in the last eight years has benefitted from guidance and a relationship with Scottish Enterprise.

> ***"Scottish companies are so damnably modest that they're unwilling to cause a fuss with something as brash as a press release."***

Better yet, the rest of the media and the arts sector are now recognising games as a valid part of their remit. Organisations including NESTA, Scottish Screen, the Scottish Arts Council – and the soon-to-exist Creative Scotland – have all said that games are just as eligible as modern dance, theatre or sock puppetry in terms of support, funding and recognition.

Plus, of course, on the cultural side, Scotland was home to the late, great *Consolevania* – arguably the best games TV show ever. We also gave the world Dominik Diamond (thank us later) and is home to the DoYouInverts (Google them).

TOMB CABER

There's a growing recognition among the studios, universities and related organisations that the future is no longer going to be dictated by mega corporations on the other side of the world. The future of the games industry is up for grabs. Direct relationships with consumers are now not just possible, but desirable – and developers can no longer be content with just creating content and waiting for someone else to distribute it, market it and deal with the happy/satisfied/angry/confused punter at the other end of the transaction.

Much of what's happening in Scotland right now reflects this. New events are springing up which are focused on the industry here in Scotland – promoting it, helping it to grow and building those relationships.

Game In Scotland, a dedicated games industry recruitment fair, ran for the third time this year pulling in representatives from all of the major studios and combining an exhibition with a fascinating speaker panel (yes, I was on it), pulling in students from all over the world.

The Dare to be Digital Protoplay event is running over the 14th, 15th and 16th of August at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. It's hugely recommended for anyone who has an interest in games. Free to get in, all of the brand new games are available to play and the teams on hand for questions. Just go!

Later this year, a brand new event is running in Dundee. NEoN (North East of North) is a digital arts festival, which promises an amazing array of speakers, workshops, exhibitions, games, animation, art and quite possibly the world's biggest games concert.

Also, we have Bert Wednesdays. You don't.

In short, there's been something of a renaissance in the Scottish games world. The companies are producing more original new titles for a wider variety of platforms than ever before. The industry as a whole is being taken seriously by the Government and by the rest of the media and arts sectors (which also, thankfully, kills another tedious industry argument stone dead. Yes, they're art. Move on).

The next 18 months or so will see more new releases and more new games. Which is what counts really. And not obscure little titles either – Realtime's *APB*, Ruffian's *Crackdown 2*, Rockstar's *Agent*, Denki's *Quarrel*, Tag's *Astro Ranch*, Cobra, Proper, 4J, Outerlight, Firebrand, Dynamo, Digital Goldfish… all coming to a platform near you.

Me? I'm just happy to be here.

Brian Baglow is (seriously – check his business card) 'Speaky Talky Blokey' at Denki, and also runs the community site *ScottishGaming.biz*
www.denki.com

40 Dev97_final 28/7/09 11:48 Page 1

41-42, 45-46 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:55 Page 1

Scotland's Got Game

Exactly what assistance is available to Scottish games studios? Scottish Development International's **Mike Shiel** runs through the initiatives that have helped the local industry flourish…

Scotland is currently ranked third in Europe's top ten locations for game development. Scotland's games studios are recognised internationally, with bestselling titles ranging from *State of Emergency*, *Harry Potter*, *Denki Blocks* (Best Developer Award, TIGA 2007), the BAFTA winning hit *Crackdown* and, perhaps biggest of all, the *Grand Theft Auto* series, which includes three of the best world-wide selling games of all time. Scotland boasts a critical mass of talented games developers with over 50 companies including Rockstar North, Realtime Worlds, Ruffian Games, Denki, Dynamo Games, Digital Goldfish, TAG Games and numerous others based here.

It's an impressive track record, and one that the Scottish Government is determined to build on through the support and work of Scottish Development International. SDI works to attract inward investment and knowledge to Scotland in order to help the economy grow. SDI also helps Scottish companies do more business overseas. Gaming is a key part of the digital media and emerging technologies sector, which is one of SDI's six priority sectors.

Key to SDI's success in helping to attract some of gaming's biggest names has been creating the right environment for the industry to thrive. Scotland offers a supportive infrastructure with SDI on hand to help developing games companies with start-up funding, a dynamic business culture and focus on innovation and access to high quality university research.

Dundee, in particular, has become a centre of excellence for computer games and electronic entertainment with the Seabraes Yards initiative at its heart. The initiative provides a high quality location around which a vibrant creative community operates and flourishes.

Seabraes Yards offers high quality accommodation which can be created in to a purpose-built environment, catering for start-up companies, indigenous businesses and inward investors. As one of the country's most important investment initiatives the project will see more than €50 million injected into the area by 2018.

Above: The Seabraes Yards development

High quality education, skills and research is also at the centre of Scottish success. The University of Abertay, which offered the world's first MSc in Computer Games Technology has recently become the UK's first Centre of Excellence for computer games education. Its profile as the UK's pre-eminent computer games and computer arts university has been further enhanced by a €3 million investment by the Scottish Government which will be used to develop two new industry-designed courses and purpose-built teaching and learning accommodation for students. The programmes will be based on the University's highly successful Dare To Be Digital initiative, a design competition aimed at encouraging students to develop new games with significant multinational funding.

> ***"Scotland has an impressive track record, and one that the Scottish Government is determined to build on."***

Scotland is also strong in software solutions technologies, serving a variety of industries such as financial services, life sciences, energy and the public sector.

A vibrant software business community supports over 1,000 companies employing over 105,000 people. Scotland offers a significant talent pool with a variety of IT language skills available from C++, VB, Cobol, to C and Java complemented by a steady stream of IT graduates from Scotland's world-class universities. Twenty per cent of all the 5/5* rated university researchers in the UK are based in Scotland, according to the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 – a country with only nine per cent of the population.

SDI is determined to ensure that Scotland remains an international digital gaming and software hotspot. Specific support for companies coming to or currently within Scotland includes:

- Regional Selective Assistance grants to provide funding to companies to help safeguard and create jobs. More than €67 million was awarded in 2008/09.

41-42, 45-46 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:55 Page 2

Above: Dare to be Digital is one of the Scottish industry's biggest achievements

• Proof of Concept funding to help turn research into commercially viable projects. Studios are given help in the first stages of commercialising or market-researching their technology, plus in finding investment by VCs.
• Unique to Scotland, Scottish Enterprise's Training Plus initiative provides funding to help with the cost of staff training. Grants can be awarded for up to 50 per cent of expenditure on training for generic skills, or up to 25 per cent if the training is company-specific.
• Backed by a ten-year, €507 million investment by the Scottish Government, ITI Techmedia sponsors research in digital media and communications. Aiming to put Scotland at the forefront of the global jobs market, it is commercially focused and market-driven – and dedicated to supporting the creation and marketing of successful new intellectual assets which will boost the Scottish economy.
• R&D funding is available and can provide up to a quarter of the cost of research and development projects in Scotland.
• Various equity funding schemes exist in Scotland such as the, Scottish Seed Fund, Scottish Co-Investment Fund and the Scottish Venture Fund – investing over €77 million in 373 projects.

Scotland is ambitious to grow this critical mass of gaming companies on to the next level and already SDI are looking forward to a number of high profile investors and businesses coming to Scotland this year.

AXIS ANIMATION

Year Founded: 2000

Headcount: 35

Key Staff:
Richard Scott (MD and executive producer)
Stuart Aitken (MD and CG supervisor)
Wiek Luijken (director)
Dana Dorian (director)
Debbie Ross (senior producer)

Previous projects:
Killzone 2, Motorstorm Pacific Rift, Fuel, Colin McRae DiRT, Racedriver: GRID, Rogue Warrior, Brink, Mass Effect 2, Crysis, Crysis 2, Thrillville Off The Rails, Heavenly Sword, F1 2009, Pure, Operation Flashpoint 2

While broadcast and commercial audiences may have come across much of Axis Animation's handiwork, it is the game buying public that are perhaps most familiar with the Glaswegian studio.

Games remain the cornerstone of Axis' business, and as a result the CGI specialist boasts an impressive CV, having worked on a number of titles renowned for their technological muscle. The likes of *Killzone 2*, *Heavenly Sword*, *Crysis*, *Mass Effect 2* and *Pure* have all courted aesthete's affections, and in each case Axis must share some of the credit for the games' reputations.

Founded in the opening months of 2000 as a division of Scottish game developer Vis, Axis has expanded gradually, and now employs 35 staff.

"Creativity, craftsmanship and attention to detail are at the heart of the Axis," says MD Richard Scott.

"Delivering these visions are our talented teams of producers and artists who ensure quality and innovation and come from a diverse range of backgrounds."

Axis became independent from Vis in 2005, and has now grown to the point where it has formed its own division, Flaunt, which now handles the studio's creative services in the advertising sector.

With expansion comes an ever-increasing skill set, and now the studio's offering includes hand-drawn animation, CGI, live action, stop motion, Flash animation, photography and illustration.

So diverse has the Scottish specialist become, that it is even developing its own children's television series, but that doesn't mean there isn't plenty of time to devote to game developers.

"Our most recent projects were two trailers for new titles from Bethesda – *Brink* and *Rogue Warrior*," reveals Scott.

Trailers aside, Axis has developed a deserved reputation for its efforts with pre-vis, but Scott is keen to point out that such projects are only one string to Axis' bow.

"Pre-vis videos are only a small percentage of our work; most of what we get asked to create is for marketing and promotional purposes," says the MD.

And as for the future of Axis? "Real-time is something we are looking at very closely for the future. We are already working on a number of real-time cutscene projects and we want to make sure we can take our vision for excellence into this area of our work as well," concludes Scott.

CONTACT:
Axis Productions Limited
Suite 225 Pentagon Centre
Washington Street
Glasgow
G3 8AZ

W: www.axisanimation.com
E: enquiries@axisanimation.com
T: +44 (0)141 572 2802
F: +44 (0)141 572 2809

31 Dev96_final 23/6/09 11:29 Page 1

Rockstar North based in Edinburgh, Scotland, is hiring for our high profile next generation titles.

We are looking for talented, highly motivated individuals to join our existing teams.
Our current vacancies include:

Tools Programmers

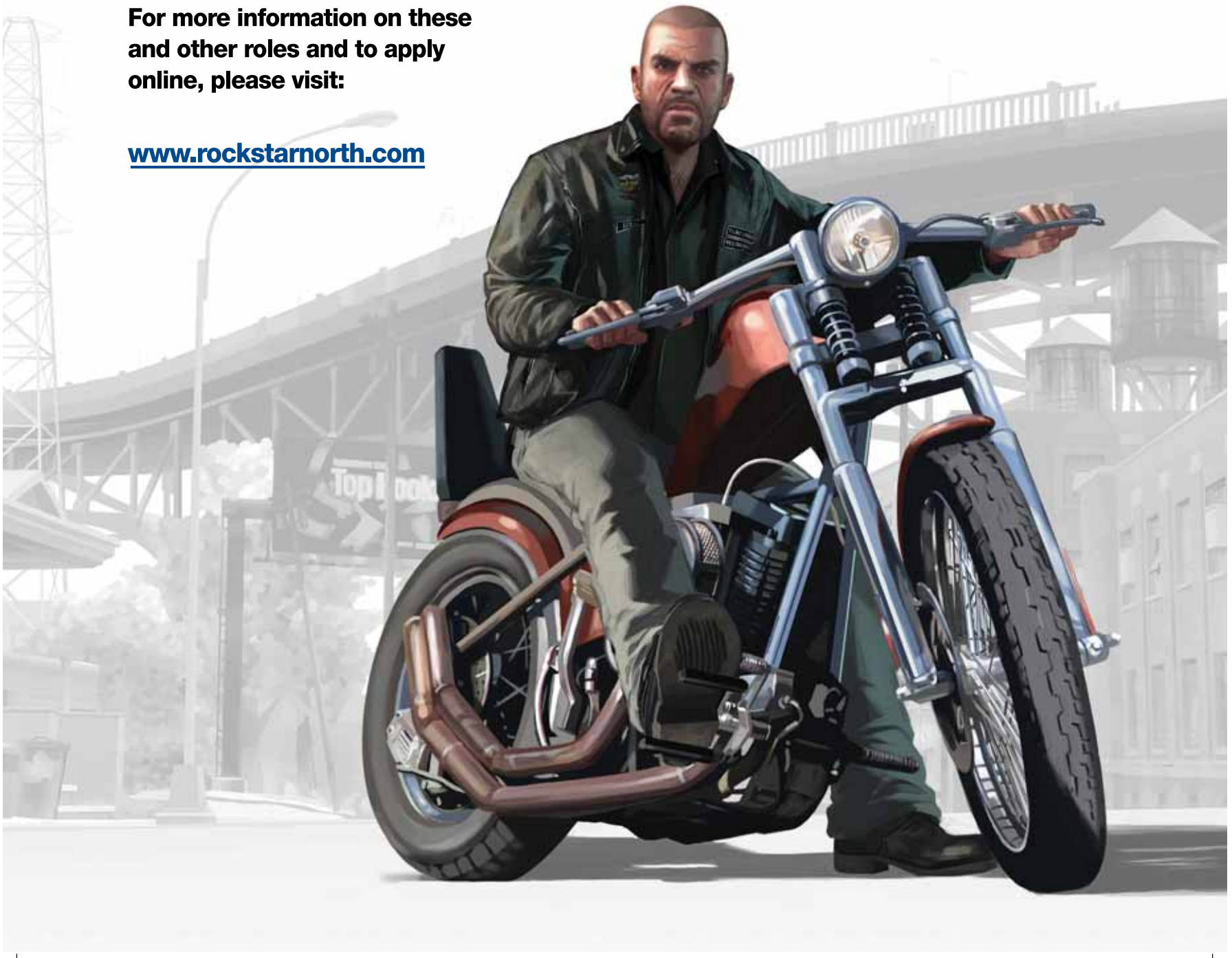
Animation Programmer

Character Animators

Environment Artists

For more information on these and other roles and to apply online, please visit:

www.rockstarnorth.com



44 Dev97_final 28/7/09 10:03 Page 1

Top Jobs From Aardvark Swift

Relentless Software
www.relentless.co.uk

Technical Artist DS2042TA
Brighton £DOE + Benefits

Relentless are seeking a talented Technical Artist to become a fundamental member of their development team. Working directly with Senior Artists and Code Leads, the role requires an ability to understand and communicate technical issues from an aesthetic point of view. You would also be expected to train Artists in new techniques, author scripted tools to streamline new and existing workflows and ensure that completed art assets are engine-legal. In particular you should be proficient with MaxScript and authoring Shaders in HLSL. Experience with Next-Gen platforms is desirable but any candidates with experience in a similar role in games will be considered.

For more information or to apply please get in touch with Dan Shiel on dan@aswift

Web www.aswift.com Tel 01709 876877

Aardvark Swift Recruitment Unit 16, Nightingale Court, Nightingale Close Rotherham S60 2AB

Aardvark Swift

Senior & Lead Designers SH332SD
Australia $Competitive + Full Relocation Support

Both Senior & Lead Designer roles are available with this award winning independent game developer. Candidates must have at least 5 year of games industry experience in a design role, and have been credited as a 'senior' or 'lead' design on one released title - XBox 360, PS3 or Wii.
Contact: simon@aswift.com for full specs and more info.

3 x Contract Programming Roles - 10 mths PA2212F
Guildford £ Excellent Day Rate

Excellent chance to work with one of the biggest names in the games industry on a brand new IP. Three roles are available - Senior Graphics Engineer, Front End Engineer and Senior Gameplay Engineer.
Contact pete@aswift.com for full specs and more info.

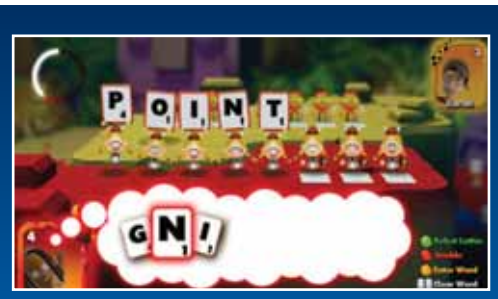
Experienced Programmers HH03525F
Australia DOE + Benefits + Relocation

A chance to work for one of the biggest development studios in Australia on interesting and varied IP's -Games industry experience is essential. Great company in a fantastic location.
Contact: hollie@aswift.com for full specs and more info.

Project Monitor DJ93PM
London £15.5K + Overtime

Our client, a rapidly expanding video games publisher and developer are looking to recruit a Project Monitor to join their QA testing management team. Previous team lead experience is essential plus good industry functionality experience.
Contact: danny@aswift.com for full specs and more info.

41-42, 45-46 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:55 Page 3



DENKI

Year Founded: 2000

Headcount: 22

Key Staff:
Colin Anderson (Boss)
Gary Penn (Chief Games Boffin)
David Thomson (#1 Fan)
Jaecinta Needs (Backbone of Denki)
Richard Ralfe (Master Tactician)

Previous projects:
From interactive TV to GBA and Xbox 360

Currently working on:
Quarrel (XBLA), plus hotly tipped, yet unannounced Wii game

Denki is a digital toy factory. We make digital toys.

The last nine years have confirmed our initial suspicion that fun is the heart of everything. So we make toys. We put them in games. We concentrate on making everything fun, because if it's not all fun and games, then it's probably work. And none of us wanted to join the 'work industry'.

Denki likes all platforms and pretty much all sorts of different genres, because they all offer something different. We like discovering new things. We're nosey and have to try everything as soon as it appears, because you never know where inspiration will strike.

We're all about the originality thing too. We've created lots of branded and licensed games over the years – and had a great time doing it – but we enjoy delivering brand new types of fun to the world whenever the opportunity presents itself. If only to quieten the voices in Gary's head and let the poor guy get some peace.

So we're currently building some brand new toys, and lovingly creating original games to wrap around them to ensure we get the most fun from them; for all sorts of different platforms. Most importantly, they all embody the Denki Difference. The Denki Difference are the key factors which make a game 'Denki': Drama, Feel, Convenience, Life and Twist. If it doesn't have these, it's not ready.

Denki likes: filling a ball pit with strawberry bubble wrap, electric rainbows which play popular melodies, undiscovered board games, liquorice bootlaces, giant striding robots which hand out candy floss, and kittens – clockwork kittens, which once every hour raise their whiskers to the sky and fire a gonk through a hoop. We're in favour of armed insurrection with water pistols, competitive pick 'n' mix and Jacuzzis full of hot squash. Oh and constraints. We think constraints can make things better. And tea. Tea makes things better as well.

Denki is an 8-bit sunrise over the post-apocalyptic wasteland of 'proper' games. We're serious, too. If it's not all fun and games, then it's not really games at all, is it

Denki. We're not like the others.

CONTACT:
Denki Towers
9 West Bell St
Dundee
DD1 1HG.

W: www.denki.co.uk
www.twitter.com/denkigames
www.facebook.com/pages/Denki/85881460412

E: denki@denki.co.uk
T: +44 (0) 1382 308645

NEoN FESTIVAL

Year Founded: 2009

Date: 13th – 14th November, 2009

Location:
Dundee, Scotland

Organiser:
Tayside Interactive

The NEoN Festival is set to take place in Dundee, Scotland in November this year, and will bring together what the organisers promise are the world's best technologies and studios as well as artists from interactive, online, videogame, music, movie, broadcast and digital media sectors.

Its name an acronym for North East of North, the NEoN event is designed to celebrate and showcase the best on offer from the Tayside area, and aims to bring people into the region and to promote the creative community within.

The Interactive Tayside organisation, which is responsible for the festival, represents a partnership of organisations with shared interests.

"The festival is organised by a group drawn from many of the territory's leading digital media companies, universities, commercial organisations and individuals," explains Donna Fordyce, an industries production manager at Scottish Enterprise, which is itself a partner in NEoN. "The companies involved include Realtime Worlds, Denki, Sooper Double D, Hungryboy and Avian."

Scottish Enterprise's role in contributing to NEoN comes about as a result of the body's role as its home country's main economic, enterprise, innovation and investment agency, which has a mission to stimulate sustainable growth of Scotland's economy.

"Dundee's been at the centre of digital technology for decades now, and as a result we have a lot of people living and working in the area who are experts in the field," says Fordyce.

"On top of that our Universities bring in more fresh talent each year who are keen to learn and apply digital technology in new and exciting ways. We wanted to create a festival that brought that experience, ambition and passion together in one place to celebrate what's already been achieved and to consider what's still to be done. A festival focussed around digital arts just felt like the best way of achieving that."

At the time of writing the final details of the NEoN event are still being finalised, but based on the confirmed keynote, it looks like the conference could attract speakers and attendees of a impressively high calibre.

"Some of the talks are sure to be special," enthuses Fordyce. "Having Bud Luckey from Pixar keynoting the first day has obviously been a real honour for us – Bud's someone who's work has inspired many of us now working in the industry, and seeing the way his artistry has translated seamlessly in to the digital realm has shown the way for many of us. But the main highlight is sure to be just having so many incredible people gathered together in one place, talking, laughing and being inspired by each other."

CONTACT:
Interactive Tayside
3 Greenmarket
Dundee
DD1 4QB

NEoN
W: www.northeastofnorth.com
E: neon@northeastofnorth.com
T: +44 (0)7913 759957

41-42, 45-46 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:55 Page 4

REALTIME WORLDS

Year Founded: 2002

Headcount: 258

Key Staff:
Dave Jones (creative director)
Gary Dale (CEO)
Ian Hetherington (chairman)

Previous projects:
Crackdown

Currently working on:
All Points Bulletin

The core of Realtime Worlds emerged from DMA design, which Dave Jones founded. 15 former staffers from the studio behind the first *Grand Theft Auto* joined Jones' new project, which rapidly grew to 70 as development on *Crackdown* peaked.

"We have two development teams at the moment," explains studio manager Colin Macdonald. "About 150 folk working on *All Points Bulletin*, and another sizeable team working on our unannounced project. Each of those is fairly self-contained, split into code, art, design and audio, with each of those disciplines further split into logical departments filled with experts in those particular areas.

"Our titles are so bespoke that we now have everything created for each project developed within the project itself, and almost everyone in the studio is solely focused on a single project."

Clearly unperturbed by ambitious goals, the studio describes its mission as one to create groundbreaking games and, where possible, entirely new genres. While it's a philosophy that might sound slightly tinged by PR hyperbole, the developer points to the likes of *Lemmings* and *GTA* as evidence of potential to innovate.

The studio attributes part of that success to its internal tech, of which Realtime Worlds is rightly proud.

"As hopefully anyone who's seen an APB demo already will attest, we've got some amazing proprietary technology – the one most talked about on *APB* being the character customisation system which has been in development since the start of *APB*, for about five years now," says Macdonald. "In terms of benefits, I think being the envy of the industry is a pretty good one."

Realtime Worlds attributes part of its success to the emphasis it places on the rewarding staff; something evident in the studio's benefits package, which includes profit sharing, share options, flexitime, private medical insurance, life insurance, pension package, income protection, relocation assistance, childcare voucher scheme, and discounts on PCs and bikes, as well as paid overtime.

And the studio's proudest achievement? "We are delighted that our first game, *Crackdown*, did so well despite a bit of cynicism as it was in development," says Macdonald. "Considering it was single-platform, and there weren't that many of those platforms out there at the time, it's a huge achievement to have sold well over 1.5 million copies for it, and to have been honoured with so many awards."

CONTACT:
Realtime Worlds
152 West Marketgait
Dundee
DD1 1NJ

W: www.realtimeworlds.com
E: enquiries@realtimeworlds.com
T: 01382 202821 (UK)

ROCKSTAR NORTH

Year Founded: 1988 (As DMA Design)

Headcount: Unconfirmed

Key Staff:
Leslie Benzies (studio head)

Previous projects:
Grand Theft Auto III, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, Grand Theft Auto IV, Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars, Manhunt, Manhunt 2

Currently working on:
Grand Theft Auto: The Ballard of Gay Tony, Agent

Founded in 1988 as DMA Design by David Jones, Russell Kay, Steve Hammond and Mike Dailly, the studio is most famously responsible for the *Grand Theft Auto* series – the impact of which continues to resonate, influencing game design and courting extraordinarily high sales.

Before its open world crime-romp debuted, DMA's biggest success was the *Lemmings* series, which continues to court iconic status today, and remains a testament to the developer's knack for witty, hugely popular output.

Shortly after relocating from Dundee to Edinburgh at the turn of the century, Rockstar bought DMA after a complicated flurry of acquisitions and deals that saw the developer pass through the hands of Gremlin Interactive, which was itself purchased by Infogrames.

In the wake of the name change that came with the sale, Rockstar North has primarily focussed on the *Grand Theft Auto* series, and is largely responsible for the brand within the wider organisation.

Shortly afterwards, *GTA III* was conceived and created, and the move into 3D that it brought about is largely responsibly for the ongoing popularity of sandbox gaming.

Rockstar heads Dan and Sam Houser continue to be fundamental contributors to Rockstar North developments, and have contributed to the *Grand Theft Auto* games as producers, voice actors, and writers, often without official credit.

Rockstar North is also infamous for the evocative nature of much of its output, and has often faced accusations of being sensationalist, immoral or, alternatively, tabloid-baiting. The studio has inflamed the senses of numerous public figures, and has been outrageously blamed numerous times by the press for influencing real world crimes.

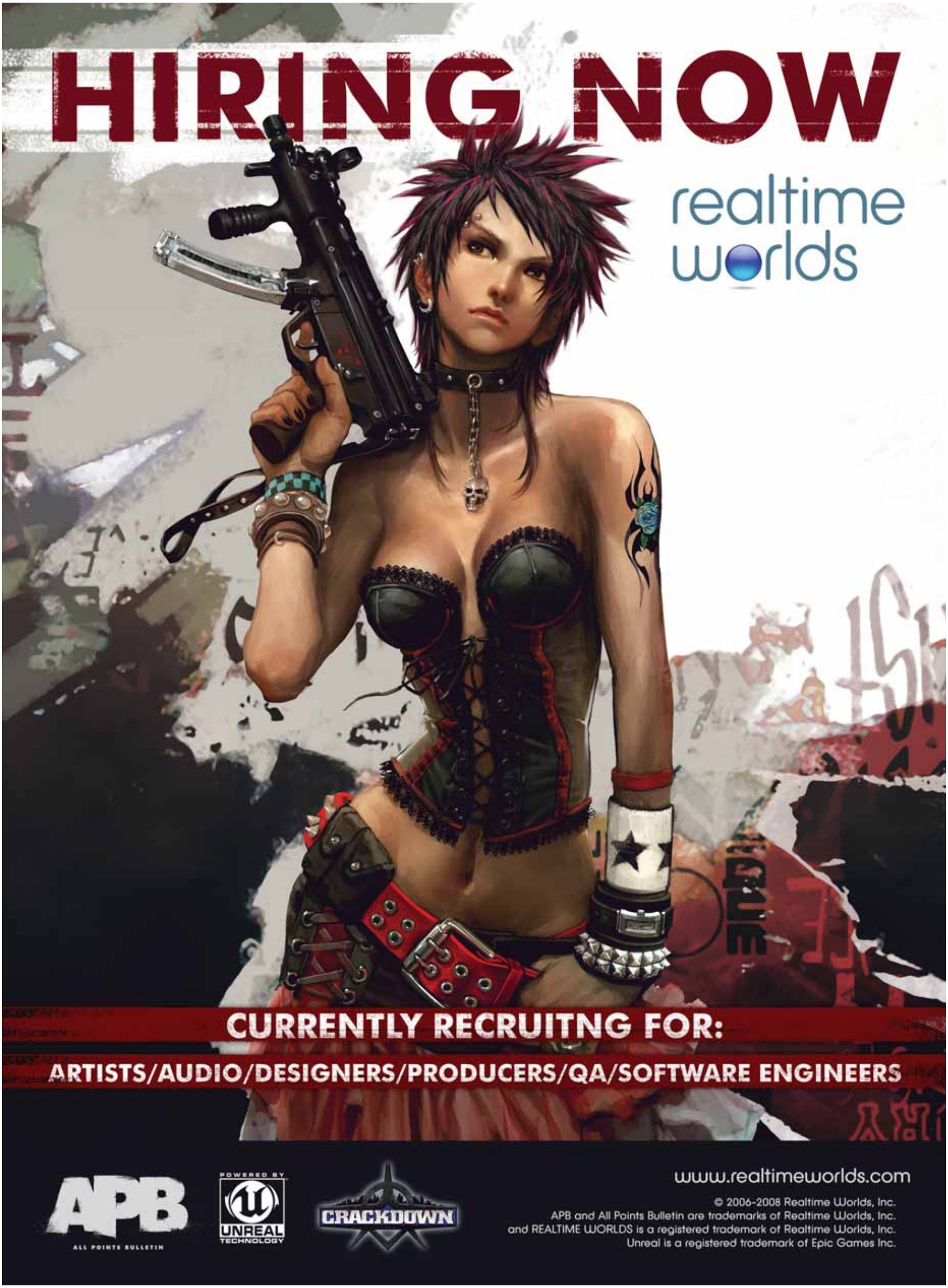
The *Manhunt* series makes for the best example of Rockstar's talent for the controversial, and the sequel to the original game still stands as one of the most contentious releases yet submitted for release.

Recent months have seen Rockstar North demonstrate an increasing interest in downloadable content in the wake of *Grand Theft Auto IV*. *The Lost and Damned* expansion is already set to be followed by a sequel, *The Ballard of Gay Tony*, which marks the studio's next release.

At E3, Rockstar North confirmed that *Agent*, a new piece of IP, is underway, and is set in the Cold War era. The game promises to take players to a world of counter-intelligence, espionage and political assassinations; a topic the studio is sure to be able to infuse with its trademark layer of cultural referencing and, perhaps, tongue-in-cheek humour.

CONTACT:
Rockstar North
Calton Square
1 Greenside Row
Edinburgh
EH1 3AP

38 Dev96_final 23/6/09 11:26 Page 1



48-49 Dev97_final 30/7/09 15:48 Page 1

Time to move on

While the Government is finally starting to listen to the games industry, it needs to be consistent in its message. Here, ex-Tiga CEO **Fred Hasson** takes a look at the battles the industry should be preparing for…

At an investment club event recently, we were told that 'moving on' is what all good leaders should do after a good go at a job.

It's what the industry now also needs to do on policy and the messages we're sending to Brussels and the Government: recent events such as the victory for ELSPA on the PEGI age ratings, and the establishment of the All Party Parliamentary Group by Tiga, represent a watershed for the games industry in its recognition by government and growing up process. However, the industry needs to develop more detailed policy now that politicians are clocking the importance of games, and also be prepared for changes in Government, the European Commission, and the fall out from the economic crisis.

With these breakthroughs comes more responsibility, and now the industry has to deliver coherent, thought through messages, and this means moving on from the 'notice us' agenda.

At the same time the industry, as with other sectors, is going to have to reposition itself for a new economic reality now that the credit and leverage binge is over. These new financial realties will also exacerbate the general malaise that is being felt in the old console and disc media part of our sector – even though it is still the greater part of those staggering sales figures that the uninitiated note about the games industry.

> ***"The industry now needs to develop more detailed policy and be prepared for changes in Government, the EC, and the fallout from the economic crisis."***

The four issues the industry will need to come to grips with are thetax break, regulation, skills, and business support and innovation.

TAXING TIMES

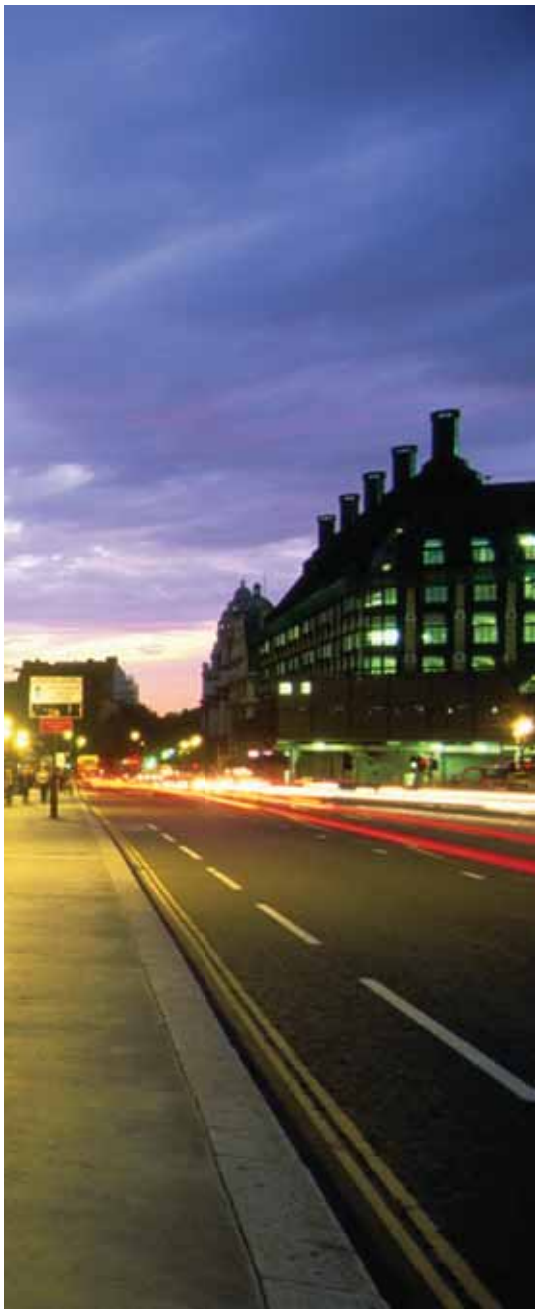
The tax break is looking more likely than ever, as the Tories show some appreciation of the potential of this industry – and an understanding of the downside of an industrial policy that has, over the past two decades, made Britain the most upmarket off-shoring shop.

But the tax break debate throws up all sorts of questions and issues that the industry could be underprepared for: will there be a tax break on similar grounds to that in film, or will it be an enhanced R&D tax break?

If it follows a similar application to film, we will need to define 'culture' for purposes of qualifying 'cultural content' – but how do we define culture? A large part of this debate in the film is governed by heritage considerations, which is not a fertile area for the current popular games output, but perhaps games can help redefine culture away from its traditional historic connotations to a least show some acknowledgement and respect of fast moving 21st century culture (and, for that matter, 'ludology' as an historical culture).

Will the industry be willing to challenge Government thinking on this or will it accept anything it can get? How will the incentive work, and to whom and how is the tax break

48-49 Dev97_final 30/7/09 15:48 Page 2



paid? Will publishers use it as a subsidy? Is that desirable? Should the developer have to own the IP?

And, perhaps more importantly, is the tax break alone going to solve the problem of UK falling down the development output league table? After all, in Canada the tax break works alongside focused educational provision, enhanced R&D support and far more generous sectoral support for accessing global markets.

REGULATION

An industry lead by PEGI has been creditably achieved, but there are more regulatory issues on the near horizon that are feeding off the same negative attitude towards games in the popular and uninformed press and among significant opinion formers.

The most prominent of these is the EU 'Telecoms Package', which has the potential to throw the baby out with the bathwater, through its very general proposals for regulating the internet. Taken to the extreme these could present a serious threat to not only the rapidly developing online games industry, but to new internet enterprises. The Government wants to know why there are no Googles or significant new media enterprises in the UK. But if proposals to filter and control access to the internet, as are possible with some interpretations of this proposed legislation go ahead, we can wave goodbye to any hope of the UK nations ever becoming entrepreneurial in a global sense and more likely to the continued hegemony of entrenched broadcasters view of media.

SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

It's time to move on from attacking academia for irrelevant higher education courses, not because the problem has gone away – it hasn't – but because that mantra is decidedly simplistic and repetitive.

What is needed now is to develop the discourse and come up with some constructive ideas about how to move forward, because the opportunity to change things is here.

A system that leads to supply-led courses and that, frankly, misleads prospective students to think that they can work in their favourite pastime as a career if they attend a games course must change but we are not the only sector that faces this problem.

Skillset has never had the dedicated resources needed to make much of a difference, and have had a top down approach, but then neither has the industry bothered to address this issue collectively or put resources into this except at local level. So far, as we said at the time to Skillset, it'll take dedicated and substantial action on a number of fronts to better the relations that some developers have had for some time with their local educational institutions.

Somewhere in the primeval soup of this debate, The Centre of Excellence idea for a post graduate 'finishing school' – which most definitely had traction in the industry two to three years ago – seems to have been engulfed in political shenanigans and lack of coherent and consistent voices.

The principles on which change must take place should be based on recognising that new and upcoming industries cannot be expected to devote as much resources as, say, an IBM can contribute. For new fledgling industries there must be some recognition that time given to education can be the difference between success and failure, between profitability and loss, and between innovation and mundanity. If Universities want placements and other industry credentials and credibility, resources should be made available to compensate them for building these relations. Tiga's position on skills as presented to the Chancellor recently is most definitely a step in this direction.

RDA-TEAM

As political parties face the current and serious economic realities, the Tories have focused on Regional Development Agencies for possible abolition. Would the games industry cry if RDAs as we know them now were abolished? What implications would this have on the support some lucky parts of the country have had from networks such as GameHorizon and Game Republic, which have both delivered significant assistance to members?

Looking back on the first years of Tiga, it seems that things were mostly quite simple when we dealt with the DTI, and then suddenly all these regional networks began to spring up. Some were stillborn, others thrived, but on each occasion companies in the area wondered why they needed a national organisation when they could get more goodies locally and pay little or nothing for them. At this point, it became difficult to develop and hold down coherent views on any issues, especially training.

Some lucky companies got grants for travelling to shows and conferences, but most did not, and as the games industry became more fashionable every RDA had to send out more and more support people from various departments to check out GDC and E3 so that they too could become experts. In my opinion too many fiefdoms have been created and, whilst much of the work has been helpful to the industry, there is something quaint and merely political about the way the RDAs have panned out – getting everyone thinking 'my little England region' when the issues and opportunities the industry is facing are global with a big 'G'.

RDAs have hardly delivered where the business support is really needed – investment in particular, and in encouraging innovation. We were told when RDAs were created that they would deliver a remedy to the equity gap between angel investors and serious VCs – the £50k to £2m gap. However, we saw few signs of this in any part of the country at Tiga, and our experience at Redbedlam with Finance South East has frankly been hilarious if it were not tragic.

One innovation initiative does however stand out, and whilst not perfect, the recent TSB initiatives to encourage research and innovation to the AV industries with a strong focus on games. It is a good start and should be defended against possible cuts, maybe because it is national. The fund is small and still works along the practices developed for larger and less eclectic industries; its main failing is that it will pay 100 per cent grants to Universities but half or less to companies, and its rules discriminate against the way small companies work.

Providing business support to new industries is a specialist job; there has to be a clear distinction between what can be done at national and international level and what can be done at regional level. The RDAs and the business support organisations they inherited, and which have become ossified over their existence since Thatcher's government introduced them under Hesletine, will be in the political spotlight soon, and playing beggar my neighbour with business support grants with the neighbouring region has been a far from efficient way to generate innovation and investment in the a global games industry.

With recognition comes responsibility, and the biggest challenge the industry faces is coherence. Can it face up to the new political challenges and opportunities?

Fred Hasson is executive director of virtual world firm Red Bedlam. He helped found Tiga in 2001 and served as its CEO until 2008. **www.redbedlam.com**

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51 Dev97_final 30/7/09 17:09 Page 1

BUILD

THE LATEST TOOLS NEWS, TECH UPDATES & TUTORIALS

HEARD ABOUT: Examining Killzone 2's audio, p58

TOOLS: Trinigy & Havok tie-up

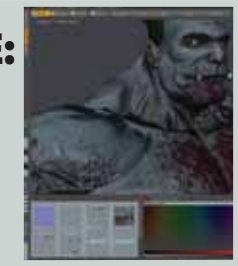
p52

GUIDE: Audio engines

p54

KEY RELEASE: Modo 401

p57



Video Games

Can pre-recorded video sequences make costly CG a thing of the past? p61

EPIC DIARIES: HOW MAGNACARTA 2 USES UNREAL ENGINE > P59

52-53 Dev97_final 30/7/09 12:55 Page 1

Conference considerations

ANOTHER YEAR, another Develop Conference come and gone.

It was encouraging to see how many technology firms were still up to exhibiting in the Expo Hall, including some new faces. Emergent were there, finally expanding its UK presence to entice further European developers. Blitz, too, had a stall dedicated to showing off BlitzTech – about which we've written previously – including frequent 3D demonstrations that regularly drew crowds. Stalwarts Dolby and Hansoft were joined by TechExcel and Scaleform, and there was even a teaser booth pre-announcing Phonetic Labs' new speech synthesis technology, which we'll be taking a deeper look at within the next few months.

In terms of the actual sessions, though, there were certainly less technology-focused talks this year than before. It's most likely down to the mid-cycle technology slump: the focus now isn't so much on learning new methodologies and grappling with new techniques, but optimising to squeeze every last drop out of the current crop of machines.

One thing that was interesting, in addition to Sony's coding keynote – complete with demonstration of the recently-announced PlayStation Eye Motion Controller – was Lionhead's examination of their art workflow. Although there had been several tool changes throughout the development of *Fable* and *Fable II*, one surprising aspect was that they've all but ditched Photoshop; one tool that you'd probably never think to marginalise. Although it's still used for final touch-ups of textures, the actual painting and texturing is now done almost entirely within ZBrush.

Just goes to show – you never can predict what's going to happen in this industry.

Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

In Trinigy with

Why have you formed this partnership?
Dag Frommhold, Trinigy: As a self-funded company, our roadmap is first and foremost driven by customer requests. Over the past year, we have received many requests to integrate Havok Physics into the Vision Engine. We've enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Havok and know that the emphasis they place on simplifying the workflow is similar to our own. So the integration made sense from many perspectives.

What's in it for Havok?
Jeff Yates, Havok: It's primarily about customer choice. We view our partnership primarily as a way of enabling more choice for our current and prospective customers – and as a way of raising the bar on the quality of integration that can be achieved by working directly with a company like Trinigy. Havok has for some time been working to enable broader access to its core technologies, via the public download on our website.

However, to enable truly out-of-the-box integration between Havok Physics and a game engine that includes a complete tool pipeline and run-time solution, we needed to establish something more committed than just a public download. That's how we came to our agreement with Trinigy, and we genuinely believe it will enable Trinigy/Havok customers to experience the most comprehensive physics-engine integration available in the commercial market.

So, from the other angle: what's in it for Trinigy?
DF: The Vision Engine was architected from the beginning to integrate well with other game development tools and middleware. We do this because our customers want tools that are not only free of technical hindrances, but that also allow them to efficiently create the games they want to make. Working with an industry-leading company like Havok to improve our toolset benefits us and our customers.

Most importantly, what's in it for developers?
DF: Trinigy focuses a lot of attention on giving our customers more technical and creative freedom with our engine. Part of that freedom can be found in the workflow and how our customers access various tools in their pipeline. By providing a more efficient workflow to share data, concepts and ideas between tools, our customers have more time to focus on quality.

Does the deal preclude either of you working with other similar companies in the middleware space?
DF: The deal does not preclude Trinigy or Havok from working with any other partner. In fact, the Vision Engine already has integrations with two other physics middleware products, giving our customers the freedom to choose the solution best suited for their applications.

Q: Do you think more middleware firms should work together? Why?
DF: Absolutely. In our case, it is essential to allow our customers to freely move between the tools commonly found in their pipeline. The Vision Engine has been carefully designed to provide the most technical and creative freedom possible. We listen to our customers and integrate with many world class solutions, but also make it straightforward to integrate the Vision Engine with in-house tools. Again, it comes down to workflow. If game developers have problems moving or sharing data between applications, that can slow development time, drive up costs, limit creativity and ultimately affect the quality of the game.

What major issues in terms of workflow efficiencies has this partnership conquered?
DF: Developers get a fully integrated one-stop solution which allows them to interactively add Havok physics to their scenes. They can visually edit and tweak physical properties in vForge,

> ***"If game developers have problems moving data between applications, that can drive up costs and limit creativity."***
>
> *Dag Frommhold, Trinigy*

our scene editor. Since the Havok integration leverages the Vision Engine's modular object component system, Havok physics can freely be combined with any of our other features, and of course with other complementary middleware solutions.

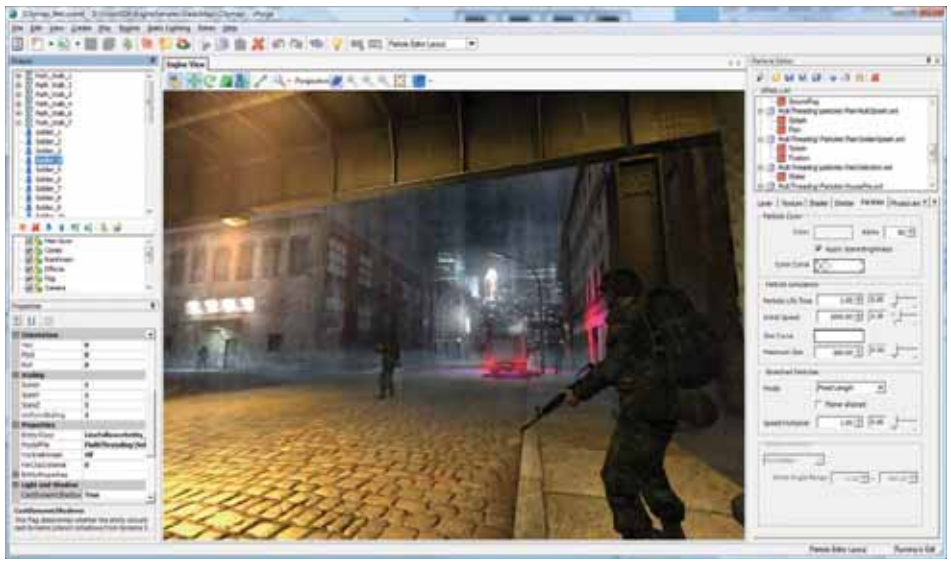
What other issues facing developers do the two of you hope to tackle?
DF: Our focus is on providing an efficient and adaptable workflow while ensuring top performance across all our supported platforms. Developers using both Havok's Physics and the Vision Engine for their upcoming projects will now find an integrated solution with vForge as a streamlined, unified editing environment.

How are you both preparing for the coming wave of smaller footprint portable devices, such as iPhone, new PSP, and netbooks?

52-53 Dev97_final 30/7/09 12:55 Page 2

Havok

It's one of the world's most popular pieces of middleware, but the first engine to get a pre-baked Havok Physics integration is Trinigy's Vision Engine. **Michael French** caught up with Trinigy's Dag Frommhold and Jeff Yates to discuss the partnership…



DF: We continually optimise the Vision Engine to provide highly efficient code with a small memory footprint. Since our technology already scales to the largest multi-processor environments available, and we simultaneously support less scalable processing hardware such as integrated graphics chips on the PC, we're confident we are well prepared for all upcoming platforms. We have ongoing conversations with both our customers and various platform providers to ensure we address the needs of our customers as the market evolves.

JY: Havok has historically followed customer demand in determining what platforms to support. To that end, Havok Physics, Havok Animation, and Havok Behavior have all been ported to the Sony PSP, and presently there are over a dozen titles released on the PSP using Havok technology. We are also quite familiar with the iPhone technology itself, and given sufficient demand, we see no major hurdles in moving Havok Physics on to that platform. Certainly, there seem to be many untapped possibilities in the realm of puzzle- and *Boom Blox*-esque games where physics can play a very meaningful role, without dwarfing the device's computational power.

Similarly, how are you preparing for the multi-core processors that will be found in upcoming PCs and the next generation of consoles?

DF: We carefully optimise the Vision Engine for each supported platform, which allows developers to efficiently utilise available hardware resources right out of the box. The Vision Engine also supports multi-threading, stream processing, and a host of other performance-enhancing features. We work closely with hardware providers to ensure the Vision Engine is optimised for new GPU and CPU designs. It's been designed with n-core architectures in mind. Customers have enjoyed multi-core support for years and can be confident we will continue to optimise as new hardware becomes available.

JY: Multi-core platforms like the PS3 and Xbox 360 have certainly become the litmus test for middleware in the last three years – and Havok has dedicated significant resources to optimising for that space. This is an area where we only continue to deepen our expertise and product offering, through titles in production. So I suspect we will be very much focused on any new multi-core devices that enter the market in the future.

There's currently a lot of talk of cloud and server-based gaming. How much of an impact do you think the potential move towards these systems have on the middleware business?

DF: We are following this discussion with great interest. Cloud-based applications have many of the same middleware requirements as today's games. We will continue to watch for opportunities in this sector.

www.trinigy.net
www.havok.com

Above: Dag Frommhold, Trinigy

54 Dev97 GUIDE_final 28/7/09 17:25 Page 1

GUIDE: AUDIO ENGINES

Want your game to sound its best? **Ed Fear** rounds up the biggest and the best audio engines on the market…

Sometimes, it's easy to get caught up in the progress of technology for technology's sake. When faced with new possibilities, it's difficult to not immediately rush to utilise them to their fullest; to provide experiences that weren't available before.

The industry has definitely been guilty of this at times: witness the rush to HDTV when barely anyone owned a set, and the hype around stereoscopic 3D when, according to Mark Rein, over half of the people who played *Gears of War 2* weren't playing it on an HDTV. And it'll probably still be a quarter using SDTVs when we're all crowing about holographic displays as being the Next Big Thing.

Similarly, audio can be held equally accountable in the over-promising stakes. For a while, all of the talk was about 5.1 and the new realms of experience that could be uncovered by surround sound. But, we wonder: how many people really have surround systems? And yet listen to sound designers and programmers now and they'll be talking about 7.1 – as if five-and-a-bit speakers weren't enough.

Rather than chase the technological train quite so openly, though, the audio middleware companies have been charting a new frontier: making their tools accessible. Perhaps brought about, or at least brought on by, Audiokinetic's bursting onto the scene, its two competitors listed below have both explicitly said that a big focus of theirs is to improve their editing interface. Naturally, the idea of using middleware is to save time and money, but if there's no easy interface for your sound designers to use then it's all down to the programmer, and a lot of those potential savings are wasted. And as for the new frontier? Perhaps it's iPhone – both FMOD and CRI's products are now iPhone compatible.

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Ubisoft, EA, SNK Playmore, Darkworks, Pandemic, Yuke's, CCP

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PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
Via website

Wwise's audio editor-centric pipeline has found many fans within the industry

www.audiokinetic.com

Wwise continues to find more and more customers as time goes on, powering major titles like the upcoming *Assassin's Creed 2*, *The Saboteur*, *I Am Alive* and *Army of Two: The 40th Day*. But, not content with resting on its laurels, Audiokinetic has continued to innovate in ancilliary markets – while last year saw the introduction of Wwise Motion, it's the new Soundseed range of procedural audio generators that are promising avenues of exploration. The first, Impact, is already available.

FMOD

fmod
music & sound effects system

DEVELOPER
Firelight Technologies

CLIENTS
Blizzard, Midway, Remedy, Crytek, Sony Online Entertainment, THQ

PLATFORMS
PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Xbox, Xbox 360, GameCube, Wii, iPhone

PRICE
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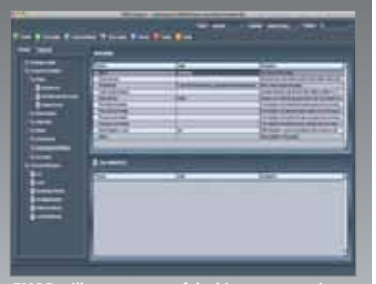


FMOD still courts some of the biggest names in development

www.fmod.org

The long-standing FMOD is still one of the most popular audio engines on the market, evidenced by such titles as *Alan Wake*, *Brutal Legend*, *DJ Hero* and *Bioshock 2* utilising the tech. Perhaps somewhat influenced by Wwise's editor-centric approach, Firelight has invested a significant amount of time in the FMOD Designer to make the tech more friendly. Latest updates include support for .kar karaoke files, hardware accelerated .xm support on PS2 and PSP, and granular synthesis.

CRI VIBE 2.0

CRIWARE™

DEVELOPER
CRI Middleware

CLIENTS
Square Enix, Capcom, Sega, Namco Bandai, D3 Publisher, Nintendo

PLATFORMS
DS

PRICE
TBA

CONTACT
Via website

CRI is targeting its efforts on platforms with tighter space requirements

www.cri-mw.com

The second version of CRI's Vibe DS engine is currently shrouded in secrecy, with more details set to be announced in September – but what has been said is that this version will take what made the first version popular and add an easy-to-use interface that audio designers will quickly become used to. As detailed last month, CRI is also dedicated a huge amount of resources to the iPhone, with a version of Vibe already available in Japan and 'planned' for a Western launch.

OPENAL

CREATIVE

openAL

DEVELOPER
Creative Labs

CLIENTS
Avalanche, EA DICE, 2K Boston, Ubisoft

PLATFORMS
PC, Xbox 360

PRICE
See website for details

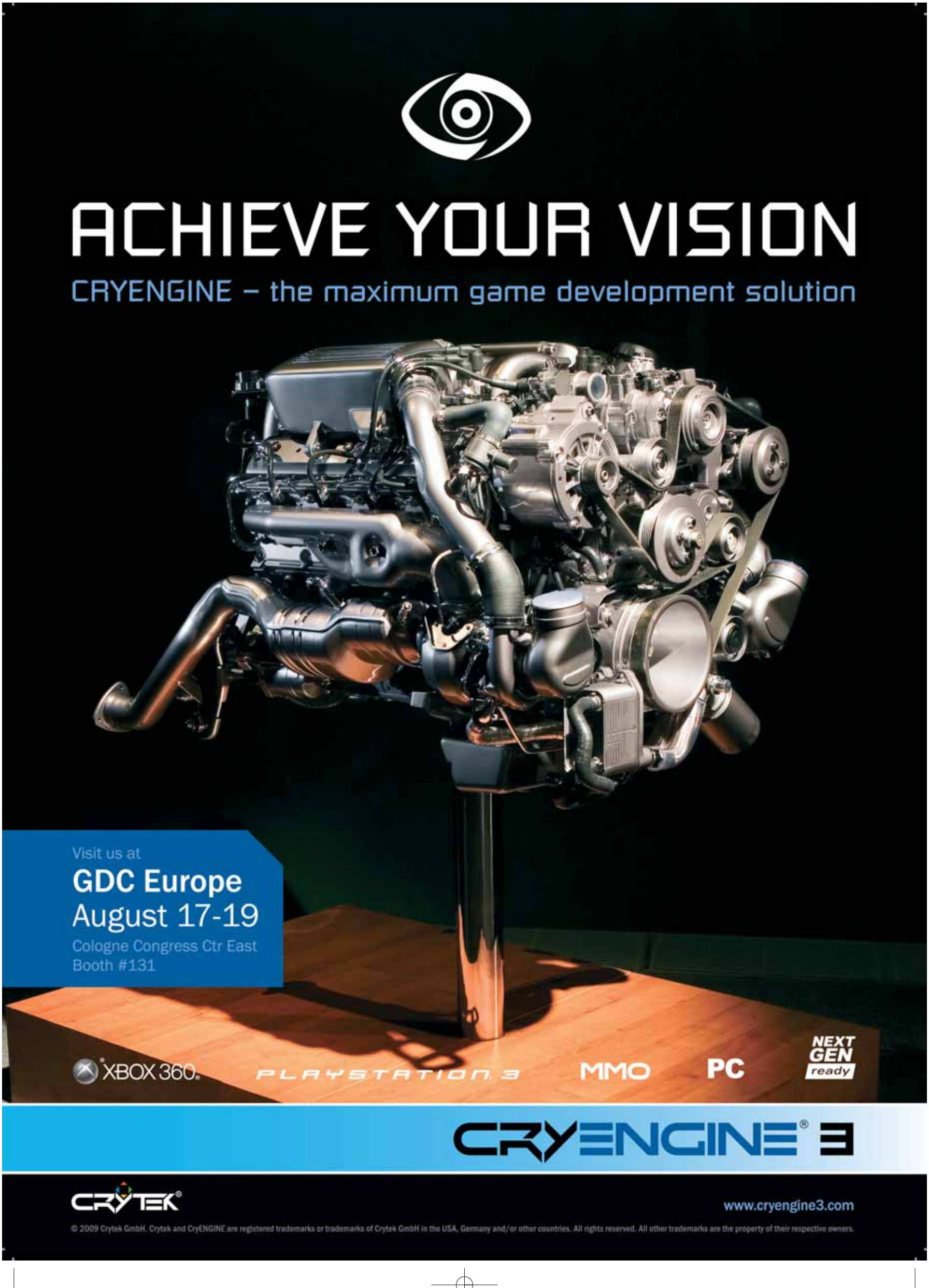
CONTACT
Via website

OpenAL has essentially become the standard audio interface for Windows Vista

connect.creativelabs.com/openal/

OpenAL is Creative Labs' cross-platform 3D audio API geared towards games. It's also, as the name implies, open source.
Since Microsoft's ditching of hardware acceleration for DirectSound 3D, OpenAL has become the standard audio solution for PC gaming, and also has the support of Apple and NVIDIA. Creative also supplies a native binary for registered Xbox and Xbox 360 developers, as well as the ALUT utility library to make OpenAL a breeze to program.

51 Dev97_final 17/7/09 12:26 Page 1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56 Dev97_final 30/7/09 09:48 Page 1

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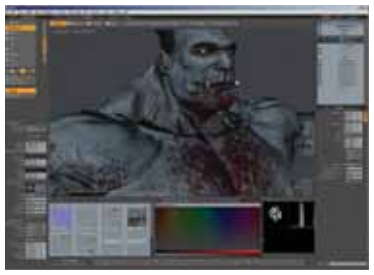
57 Dev97_final 30/7/09 13:58 Page 1

KEYRELEASE

Modo 401

Luxology's latest update has much in store for game developers, **Ed Fear** discovers…

PRODUCT: Modo 401
DEVELOPER: Luxology
PRICE: $995
CONTACT: luxology.com/modo



Left: Sega's Golden Axe remake was created with Modo

Above: Brad Peebler, CEO of Luxology

Internal disagreements in the workplace are never a desirable situation - but sometimes good can come out of them.

Modo is actually a byproduct of such a dispute. Originally working at Newtek, the developers of Lightwave, an internal disagreement about a complete rewrite of the system caused the company's vice president of 3D development, Brad Peebler, to leave and start Luxology with the app's two lead developers.

Almost five years after the initial release, Luxology is back with version 401 of the increasingly-popular tool.

At first glance, many of 401's improvements may look as if they're geared towards other industries. Take the new light and shading features: volumetric lighting makes its first appearance, closely followed by photon mapping, tone mapping, blurry refraction and dispersion. All great, but surely of more use to those working on offline renders?

Not so, says Peebler: "Of course, in terms of relevance to games, you can say that all of these features are useful for rendering cutscenes. But, it's important to remember that everything you can render can also be baked – it's just rendering through your UVs rather than through the camera."

For example, one of the other major new features in modo 401 is fur. Rather than being limited to just making fuzzy critters, though, the fur system is extensible enough that it can render eyebrows, eyelashes, hair and even sturdier stuff like paintbrush bristles. And, because it all gets resolved to polygons before render anyway, says Peebler, you can bake shadow and displacement maps that take this into consideration. "If you do a surface render it'll catch the shadows and shading from the fur and build in into the texture maps, and you can bake normal maps through the fur."

GAME FOR IT

Speak to most 3D tool developers and it's hard not to get a sense that games are just a very small piece of the overall picture; that real-time 3D use doesn't drive the development of the product. You might get that impression from Modo 401, in fact. But some big studios are not only putting modo at the centre of their content pipelines, they're also getting use out of the new rendering engine and 'ancilliary' features.

One such studio is Black Rock, which has used Modo extensively in the development of the forthcoming *Split/Second*. "They use subdivision surfaces so that they can build the low-res cage for game use, and then for the cinematics they can subdivide that up and down to get much higher quality models," says Peebler.

Black Rock also utilised another new aspect of modo – presets. Like their name implies, presets are pre-built assets, materials and environment/lighting configurations that can simply be dragged and dropped into the viewport.

"These guys didn't have a licence to use real-world cars, so they had to build their own car designs. They wanted them to actually be cars that, since they wouldn't be ones you could actually see, would be cars that you'd *want* to own. So they used our global illumination to do mock renders during the design phase of the cars, and then also used our preset system – dragging and dropping materials, environments – to create beauty shots for marketing materials."

Another studio that's using modo for more than just modelling is id. "They're using Modo as the core of their pipeline for *Rage*," Peebler continues. "They're using it for environments, for characters, for a lot of their texture baking, and for level design. They can model, paint, sculpt and bake within a single application. The artists there have even created their own custom tools and layouts to maximise the efficiency of modo for their use."

But it goes beyond just these two big names – Peebler reveals that, going through its userbase on a market analysis exercise, the firm discovered that of its top ten customers by volume, a whopping seven of them are games companies.

"We really do have a high adoption rate in the games space," Peebler continues. "In fact, much more so than in television and film in fact. I think that comes down to the fact that we do have such detailed and robust baking tools integrated with those modelling tools."

Well, they're certainly doing something right.

Team Price

While the high profile developers are certainly a boon, Luxology also has a huge amount of customers at the other end of the spectrum, too – small, independent developers or freelance artists.

"We're finding that a lot of freelancers out there, and a lot of iPhone game developers, flocking to Modo," explains Peebler. "A lot of our growth has been recently amongst the freelance crowd, because we're less expensive and we don't require maintenance contracts. Some people who have been laid off recently want to strike it alone, and we have a lot of people who are doing just that, starting their own one or two man shops. Modo's price point and feature set is perfect for those sorts of environments."

And for these guys working on lower-end platforms or products, the team is still dedicating a large amount of its time to improving the core modelling tools available in the suite.

"It's easy to get caught up in the gloss of rendering and animation enhancements, but we're a native polygonal modeller first – even our subdivision surfaces are just polygons. In Modo, you have direct access on every vertex, so you can go in push and pull those verts numerically if needs be. It has the flexibility that low-poly modellers need, and we still spend a tremendous amount of time on these tools."

58 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:14 Page 1

HEARD ABOUT Killzone 2

John Broomhall talks to Mario Lavin, sound director for Guerrilla Games and guest speaker at the Develop Conference's audio track…

Mario, we're delighted to welcome you to this year's conference. Tell us a bit about yourself.
ML: I'm responsible for the overall direction of everything that comes out of the speakers for Guerilla's titles.

How do you kick off the process? What design stages are there?
ML: We start by working with concept artists and game designers to get an idea about how the game will play and feel, and what enemies, weapons, vehicles and scenarios there will be. We then do our field recording and 'concept sound designing,' which includes vocal processing design, ambient design and musical style definition. During pre-production we design and enhance our integration pipeline and tools.

Killzone 2 is a cinematic sci-fi combat FPS. The soundtrack helps the player become immersed and provides a sonic atmosphere that adapts contextually as they traverse an area – the sound mix and parameters of individual sounds vary.

For example, when transitioning from inside a small building with concrete walls to outside thunderstorms with near-hurricane winds, not only will the ambiences change, but also the guns and explosions. In addition, DSP that affects the sounds will reflect that as accurately as possible by changing parameters – for example, shortening reverb reflection times and the decay of guns and explosions.

We used a lot of DSP and sound modelling techniques. My aim was to create the overwhelming chaos of war but in a cinematic way, making sure the Helghast sounded believable as an enemy. We spent a lot of time designing the voice processing and casting the right voices. I also felt this game needed an intensity-based adaptive music system to further engage the player.

How much was large distance and scale an issue for you?
ML: I wanted to make sure all weapons and explosions had different sounds after a certain distance threshold was crossed, because it helps convey the sense of space a lot better than the same sample just having fall-off via attenuation curves.

How did you approach the sound design for those massive bosses and robots?
ML: Mainly by voice processing and casting, plus huge stomping footsteps to make them sound heavy. For robotic sounds, it took a lot of synthesis and animals combined. Definitely fun!

Was much live recording work done?
ML: Luckily Amsterdam gets great thunderstorms so we could capture a lot of useful ambiences. We recorded guns and weapon foley locally and, for the ISA-Intruder vehicle, we recorded local trains and trams – a very distinct electric whine, later combined with jets and synthesis. The first person player foley was mostly recorded from scratch, too.

And the music?
ML: The game's composer, Joris De Man, is extremely talented and versatile – he's also a great sound designer, so understands perfectly how to make music and sound work together. We recorded the score for theme and cinematics at Abbey Road with the Nimrod Session Orchestra. The rest was produced electronically by Joris and mastered at SCEA.

How did you make the adaptive music work?
ML: We would make presets for each level with combat intensities, driven by the number of AI enemies the player was fighting and how fast they are killing them. The music is not always playing; we wanted it to accentuate combat and drive the more emotional moments. Joris made several intensities based on bars/measures and composed loops with reverb tails, so cross-fading transitions sound seamless.

What are your reflections on how music and sound should work together?
ML: It's give and take. Music can help immensely with the pacing but can also be overkill; if the sound design is emotional, it can deliver the same intended effect that music does. But they should never compete.

Do you have a lot of 'dynamic' mixing depending on game states and events?
ML: Our mixer has 192 voices running to 31 sub-mix channels which go to three final mix channels in the user menu. All individual sounds are routed to a sub-mix channel category – i.e. first person weapons, explosions, and the like. The sub-mix is linked to a 'mixer-zone trigger' in the game editor, placed in the levels room-by-room and cross-faded dependent on player traversal. We customise volumes for each mix-zone – for example, in a vehicle we turn down explosions and gunfire to hear the vehicles a bit louder. There's no limit to the number of sub-mixers within a level or section, and they're previewed and adjusted in real-time during sound implementation.

Are you pleased with the final results?
ML: I'm overall happy with *Killzone*'s audio – if I had to pick one thing, it would be the guns. I like them loud and dirty! We were fortunate to get a 9/10 critic average so it looks like our hard work paid off.

Guerilla's Mario Lavin. He likes them 'loud and dirty,' apparently. His words, not ours.

John Broomhall is an independent audio director, consultant and content provider
develop@johnbroomhall.co.uk
www.johnbroomhall.co.uk

59 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:11 Page 1

MAGNACARTA 2 BROUGHT TO LIFE WITH UNREAL ENGINE 3

Korean developer Softmax first gained experience using the Unreal Engine to develop its 2005 PlayStation 2 and PSP role-playing game, *Magnacarta: Tears of Blood*, which was powered by Unreal Engine 2. For the sequel, a team of 40 at Softmax partnered with Namco Bandai to create *Magnacarta 2* for Xbox 360 using the latest Unreal Engine 3 technology.

"There were some big improvements added to Unreal Engine 3 regarding toolsets and rendering abilities," said Yoshihisa Kanesaka, producer of *Magnacarta 2*.

"We frequently consulted the Unreal Developer Network during the early stages of development. Using the UDN archive search is very useful in getting immediate answers on everything imaginable."

On top of the processing power that Microsoft's Xbox 360 brought to the table, Kanesaka believes his team benefited from two key aspects of Unreal Engine 3.

"The Unreal Editor, which has been vastly improved from Unreal Engine 2, has always been a long-time merit of the software," said Kanesaka.

"The other advantage would be the engine's versatility. It would have been possible to develop an engine on our own if we wanted to, or to use a different middleware engine. But Unreal Engine 3 contains everything we needed to develop the game, and we thought it was useful since there is no risk in adding any other middleware to it."

From a gameplay perspective, Softmax was able to use UE3 to create a powerful loading system that allowed for the creation of huge environments. In addition, Kanesaka said they were able to create a new battle system that is both seamless and occurs in real-time.

All of the game's elaborate cut scenes were developed using Unreal Engine 3, which Kanesaka said saved Namco Bandai time and money. "We also developed this system that blows away enemies with physical attacks using PhysX," added Kanesaka.

"Big RPG titles developed by Japanese publishers use fancy effects. That's the currently popular style, and we can easily develop these effects with Unreal Engine 3 by using its particle and material editors."

Kanesaka believes Unreal Engine 3 can bring great RPG stories like *Magnacarta 2* to life. He said one of the best features of UE3 from a development standpoint is its excellent editing capabilities, which are mission critical for game engines today.

Thanks to a talented development team and publisher, and to the technology within UE3, Kanesaka hopes that *Magnacarta 2* shows critics that RPGs are, in fact, evolving. He said the team's goal is to create a new standard in excellence and presentation that sets the bar for what is considered a great RPG game.

"I think it is mandatory to use a middleware engine which minimises the risks of developing next-gen console games, so I assume more developers in Japan will use the Unreal Engine," said Kanesaka.

Japanese studios that have shipped Unreal-powered titles include Feelplus, which licensed UE3 for its collaboration on *Lost Odyssey* for Xbox 360 with Mistwalker, and Square Enix also licensed UE3 to develop *The Last Remnant* for Xbox 360 and PC.

Last autumn, Grasshopper Manufacture also licensed UE3 for its new multi-platform action horror game directed by innovative game designer Suda51 and produced by legendary *Resident Evil* creator Shinji Mikami.

Thanks to Namco Bandai for speaking with freelance reporter John Gaudiosi for this story, which will be posted in full at www.unrealtechnology.com.

UPCOMING EPIC ATTENDED EVENTS:

SIGGRAPH
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Please email: mrein@epicgames.com for appointments.

To discuss anything raised in this column or general licensing opportunities for Epic Games' *Unreal* engine, contact: **mrein@epicgames.com**

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Mark Rein is vice president of Epic Games based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1992 Mark has worked on Epic's licensing and publishing deals, business development, public relations, academic relations, marketing and business operations.
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61-63 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:09 Page 1

Having our own blue screen studio makes scheduling shoots much easier

Video Games

Can using video-based content make the next wave of Wii Fit-style 'self improvement' titles more accessible? And what's involved in actually doing it? **Phil Marley**, creative director of Lightning Fish, runs through the process…

Cast your mind back to the '90s. The Philips CD-i is bringing us games like *Burn: Cycle* that feature custom-shot video footage, as well as conversions of video-based laserdisc games like *Mad Dog McCree*. Sega releases *Night Trap*. Virgin releases *7th Guest* and sells two million copies. The *Wing Commander*, *Command & Conquer* and *Strike* series all include copious amounts of video cut-scenes.

Today, with the exception of *Command & Conquer*'s gloriously over-the-top video interludes, the industry has largely left live action behind, preferring pre-rendered CG or – more and more – in-game cut-scenes. High quality graphics have plummeted in price and give us near-seamless transitions between cut-scenes and gameplay.

So, almost twenty years after the original *Wing Commander*, why have we just finished a week-long blue screen shoot for our new game? It's all about the audience and the sorts of games we're making: self-improvement titles that help people to get fitter and eat better with one-on-one coaching.

> ***"The industry has largely left live action behind, preferring pre-rendered CG or in-game engine cut-scenes."***

Let's consider the advantages, specifically for a casual audience and specifically for these sorts of titles:

CG instructors are too perfect
Even on the most difficult exercise or task, there's no sweating, straining or apparent effort. As gamers, we're used to AI characters doing things flawlessly: when was the last time you saw an AI team mate stumble in an FPS? Casual gamers don't make the same allowances: show them a CG character that pumps out every press-up with robotic perfection and then demand that they do the same and they find it plain irritating.

It's a better blend with the future.
In a self-improvement title we often want to have a character demonstrate something and show the player how they're doing at the same time. The logical solution, with Natal and the EyeToy Wand on the horizon, is to show live video of the player. A CG trainer overlaid on top will look strange. A video blends perfectly.

61-63 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:09 Page 2

Runtime post-processing ensures that studio-shot video can blend with different CG or video backgrounds.

Video instructors have more personality
Instructional games – especially self-improvement ones – need their instructors to have a very carefully-judged personality. Too tough, or too nice, and casual gamers will switch off. With video we can cast for real-world instructors who've spent years putting people at their ease. Different people connect with different types of instructor, so we cast a range of personalities and approaches and let the player choose. These subtleties are difficult to mimic even with a suite of CG characters.

Video is the clearest way to convey info
Consider something as simple as telling the player to swap the Wii Remote from their left hand to their right hand. With CG, you have to drop out to a 2D diagram or, if you want to avoid breaking the illusion, motion-capture the entire sequence, tweaking the results by hand and creating a 3D Wii Remote, complete with realistic rope-physics strap.

With video, it's just one quick shot and the experience for the player is seamless.

Of course, I'm talking specifically about self-improvement titles here: video certainly isn't suitable for most genres. But if you're considering this sort of game, on Wii or another platform, I've collated together a few tips to help you avoid most of the pitfalls. If CG suits your title better, most of this guide is also applicable to running a motion capture shoot.

1) Think about facilities.
Lightning Fish has taken the step of building an in-house green-screen studio, but there are plenty of video production studios available for daily hire. How long will you need? We shoot a hundred shots a day, with a shot ranging from five seconds to three minutes. Think about whether you need to shoot from multiple angles and organise camera and lighting hire early. Even if you're shooting for a modest platform, it makes sense to shoot in high-definition: that way your footage is future-proofed for a while.

2) Hire a good crew
An experienced crew will save you a fortune in the long run by spotting problems that would otherwise ruin a day's work. Hire at minimum an experienced director of photography and lighting specialist, or find one who can do both. Get them involved early and get their input on the studio and your plans for the shoot ahead of time. Add a camera person for each additional camera, a make-up artist, clapperboard operator and one data logger to keep track of everything.

> ***"With video we can cast for real-world actors who've spent years putting people at their ease. We can cast a range of personalities."***

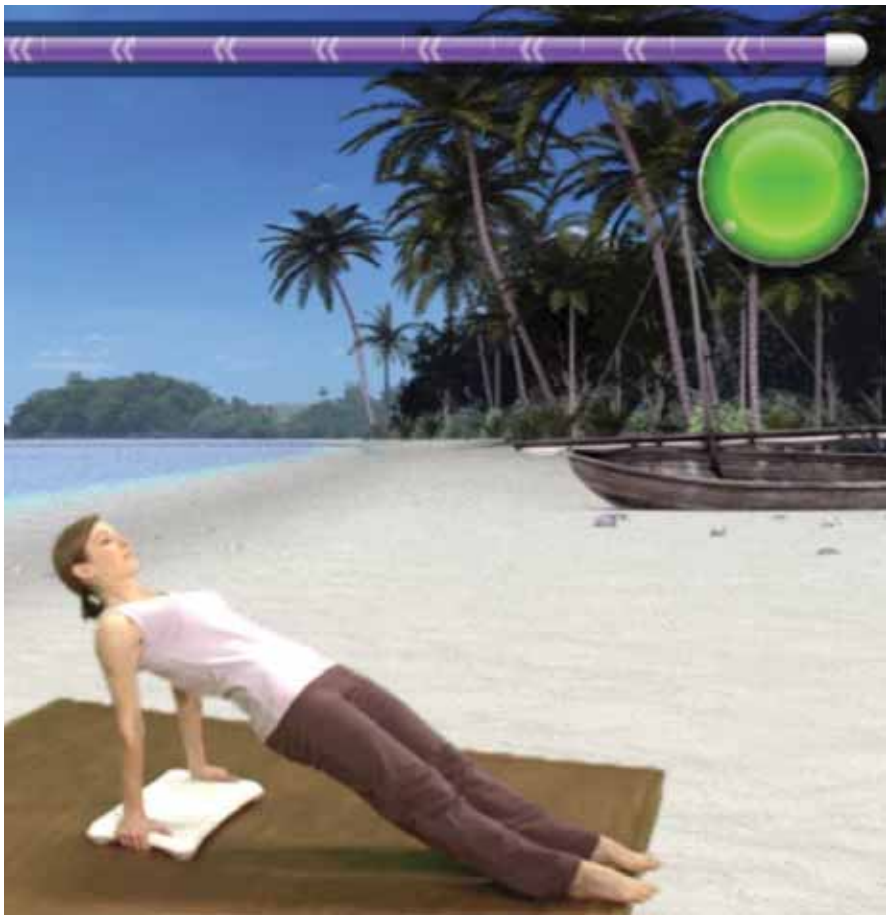
It's vital to find a good director. Ideally this will be someone from the development staff so that they know the game. The director needs to be comfortable dealing with the talent, coaxing performances and giving the orders on set: extroverts do better than introverts, in our experience. Previous experience with video is very useful: directing motion-capture shoots is a good stepping stone. Finally having someone on continuity will help you avoid costume problems, loose hair, moving shadows and other issues.

3) Consider whether you'll record audio at the same time
If you're filming for a multi-language title, you'll need to record voiceovers for the other languages separately anyway. It's often cleaner and simpler to add at least some of the speech as voiceovers, even if you use the same actors for the video and speech in the English version. It's also much easier on the actors: it's hard enough to do a complex action in one take without worrying about lines as well.
Reserve speech recording for key sections and you can cement the link between the voice and the instructor without having to slow down shooting the rest of the time. Hire at least one audio engineer to be on set and rehearse early to make sure microphones don't get in the way.

4) Cast
Since you'll need to cast for specialist skills, you're unlikely to be able to find experienced actors. You'll need to cast based on skill and find the ones who aren't camera shy and can take physical direction well. Make the casting session as close to the actual shoot experience as possible so you can assess how they'll handle the filming.

Make sure they can meet the shooting commitments and understand what they can and can't do between shoots (example: no haircuts). Take control of as many aspects as you can to eliminate problems and

61-63 Dev97_final 29/7/09 17:09 Page 3



Green screen means we can put a video trainer over a video background and let players choose where to train.

A photo-based UI means the 'video look' can continue throughout the title.

misunderstandings: it's safer to buy costumes yourself than risk an actor turning up in something with a logo you can't show or a shirt that won't work with the green screen.

5) Plan
Create a shot list, run through the flow of the game to make sure you've got everything, then check it all again. Omissions in filming can be a huge problem: if you miss a critical shot you could, in a worst-case scenario, have to throw away all the footage of that actor if you can't get them back for another shoot.

Shoot everything you'll need and everything you think you might need, and finally anything that could be useful. At the same time, assess how much edited video you can put on the disc and ensure your plan is realistic. Prioritise the shot list so that you can get the critical stuff out of the way first, and then order it to minimise equipment/set changes.

Don't forget shots for PR purposes and consider having a stills photographer on set to get marketing shots of the actors. Do everything you can to avoid having to get the actors back for a pick-up day, but at the same time assume the worst and make sure they'll be available in case it happens.

6) Rehearse
A day's rehearsal will save lots of time down the line. Make it as close to a real shoot as you can, and hire your first actor for an extra day. Consider any footage you get here to be a bonus: it's likely you'll spend the day ironing out glitches. Test the entire video pipeline, even if this means having a break between rehearsal and shoot: get some footage, post-process it, get it into the game so you can see it working.

7) Shoot
Start early and minimise unnecessary breaks – have spare bulbs for the lights and two sets of memory cards for the cameras so that you don't have to stop shooting to empty them. Make a call sheet for each day with everyone's mobile numbers on it: have backup crew where possible in case someone's ill. Get the actors there early so they can get in and out of make-up. Make sure your continuity person is on the ball and review footage as soon as possible.

> ***"Prioritise the shot list so that you can get the critical stuff out of the way first, and then order it to minimise equipment/set changes."***

8) Look after the Talent
Do everything you can to keep them happy: good quality catering, water, a dressing room, anything else they need. Make it as easy as possible for them to get to the set on-time: check they have directions to the studio, have make-up standing by and check costume sizes in advance. Every ten minutes your actors are standing around is another three shots you won't get that day. Shoot intensively and take scheduled breaks once an hour to avoid concentration dipping.

9) Edit
A multi-camera set-up means you can cover edits with a cut to another camera, giving you vastly more freedom. Eliminate pauses wherever you can: don't keep the player waiting. Decide early how much post-processing you're going to do offline and how much will be done at runtime: we allow the player to train in different locations, using runtime colour correction to ensure the trainer blends well with the chosen video background.

10) Manage the Pipeline
Video shoots produce massive amounts of data and release it all in a glut: plan accordingly. Immediately following a shoot we might have five video editors working through the footage, using in-house tools to splice it and mark it up with game data. Good editors are well worth the money.

Almost 20 years ago, we were using video to try to bring a bit of Hollywood glamour to Hollywood-inspired action games. Today, maybe instructional television can inform instructional games. CG is great at, for example, making cooking into a game (*Cooking Mama*). But if you wanted to actually teach someone how to cook, you wouldn't put a CG chef slicing a CG carrot with a CG knife on TV: you'd put Jamie Oliver or Nigella Lawson in front of a camera. Sometimes, even in games, there's no substitute for reality.
www.lightningfishgames.com

Phil Marley is the creative director of Lightning Fish Games. He has shipped around 40 titles across three generations of consoles, PC, mobile phones and interactive TV, including *Buzz! The Sports Quiz* and *Microsoft Train Simulator*. *NewU: Fitness First Personal Trainer* is out this autumn.

64 Dev97_final 27/7/09 10:30 Page 1

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65 Dev97_final 28/7/09 17:26 Page 1

Autodesk Games Insight

The latest from Autodesk Media & Entertainment

Marc Petit

WELCOME TO THE FIRST issue of Autodesk Games Insight, our monthly column on what's new with Autodesk in the games industry. In this issue, I'll cover Digital Entertainment Creation, the launch of our suites, and the new 2010 versions of our software.

DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT CREATION

This recession is putting the spotlight on the rising costs of entertainment production. At Autodesk, we believe that the key to improved efficiency and effectiveness in production is to empower artists with better and faster tools that communicate well together. That's our vision for Digital Entertainment Creation.

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Our solutions bring together game design, art creation and game programming. With faster turnarounds and more iterations, Digital Entertainment Creation helps you improve both quality and efficiency.

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"Time was our biggest challenge with Gears of War 2. 3ds Max, Maya, and MotionBuilder allowed us to iterate quickly and create content in record time. It also enabled us to go beyond anything we've done before. Without Autodesk's software, combined with our own proprietary Unreal Engine 3 toolset, we would have been hard-pressed to finish the game in such a short development cycle."

Chris Perna, art director, Epic Games

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We've just announced new versions of our software, including Maya 2010, Autodesk Softimage 2010 software, Mudbox 2010 and MotionBuilder 2010. I invite you to check out all the exciting new features on our website.

I'd like to highlight what we've done with Maya. In Maya 2010, we have combined Maya Unlimited and Maya Complete into one single product. We have also integrated compositing and match moving functionality, making Maya 2010 an ideal solution for the creation of games assets, and also for end-to-end movie-quality cinematic production.

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Marc Petit
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66 Dev97_final 30/7/09 10:34 Page 1

Testology

Develop goes behind the scenes at the up-and-coming QA firm…

Founded in 2006 by Andy Robson, former head of testing for Bullfrog and later Lionhead, Testology is often classified as a testing company but actually has a roster of services beyond simple quality assurance.

"It had always been my ambition to establish an outsourcing company that focused on quality assurance and gameplay consultancy," says Robson. "I had just completed work on the Lionhead titles *Fable*, *Black and White 2* and *The Movies* and decided that this was the perfect stage in my career to make the transition. I was very proud of my achievements with Bullfrog and Lionhead, but felt ready for a greater challenge."

And so, despite starting up without any business experience or even external investment, Testology's rapid rise to the big leagues is even more impressive.

"In 2006, we had one member of staff and myself. Now, in 2009, we have continued to expand and grow, now reaching 40 testers. It's a testament to the success we've experienced even during this period of recession, which luckily has not really affected us."

CONSULT WARS

What really sets Testology apart, however, is its gameplay consultancy work. It comes from what Robson calls his "unrestrained honesty and commitment to releasing the highest level of games possible," and was partly borne from his experiences working alongside Peter Molyneux, who valued the opinions of his testing staff.

"We've worked with many clients who send us game prototypes, semi- or fully-complete levels, and even design documents. In addition to our usual feedback and bug reporting regarding the basic functionality of the title, we objectively assess the quality of the work and offer our opinions and suggestions for improvements. Usually, the client is surprised by the amount and quality of the feedback we present in our report, but they always value and consider our opinions when making alterations."

One of Testology's other strengths is its rigorous hiring processes – Robson boasts that, in the three years he's been running the company, he's conducted over 1,700 interviews. The firm's attitude to staff also stretches to not treating them as just battery hens, too, but rather embracing the fact that a lot of people get into testing in order to get into the industry.

"We most definitely encourage our staff to cultivate their interest in game development," says Robson. "Testing allows individuals to understand the process, developing skills essential for success in the industry. This has led to many of the individuals I employed as testers with no previous experience now holding senior positions within large publishers and developers. I have always promoted and encouraged this ambition with my testers and will continue to do so at Testology."

But, at the end of the day, what really keeps on attracting new business is the strength of Testology's experience.

"We've worked on over 40 AAA titles, and that's undeniably one of our defining strengths. This experience is seen in our daily communication skills with our clients, whether developer or publisher, and hiring processes. At Testology, we are also extremely flexible. Our ability to react and adapt to our clients needs, allow them to shift and reshape testing coverage as they please, which is fundamental during the crunch phase of development."

TESTOLOGY

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40

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2006

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Fable 2, LittleBigPlanet, and more

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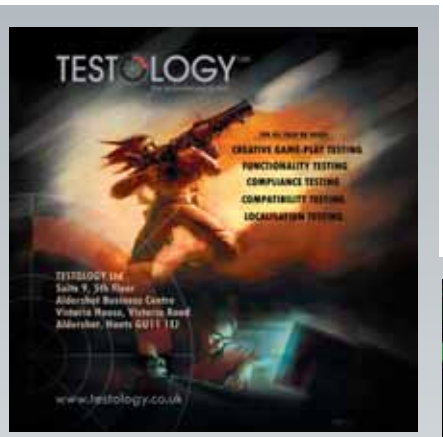
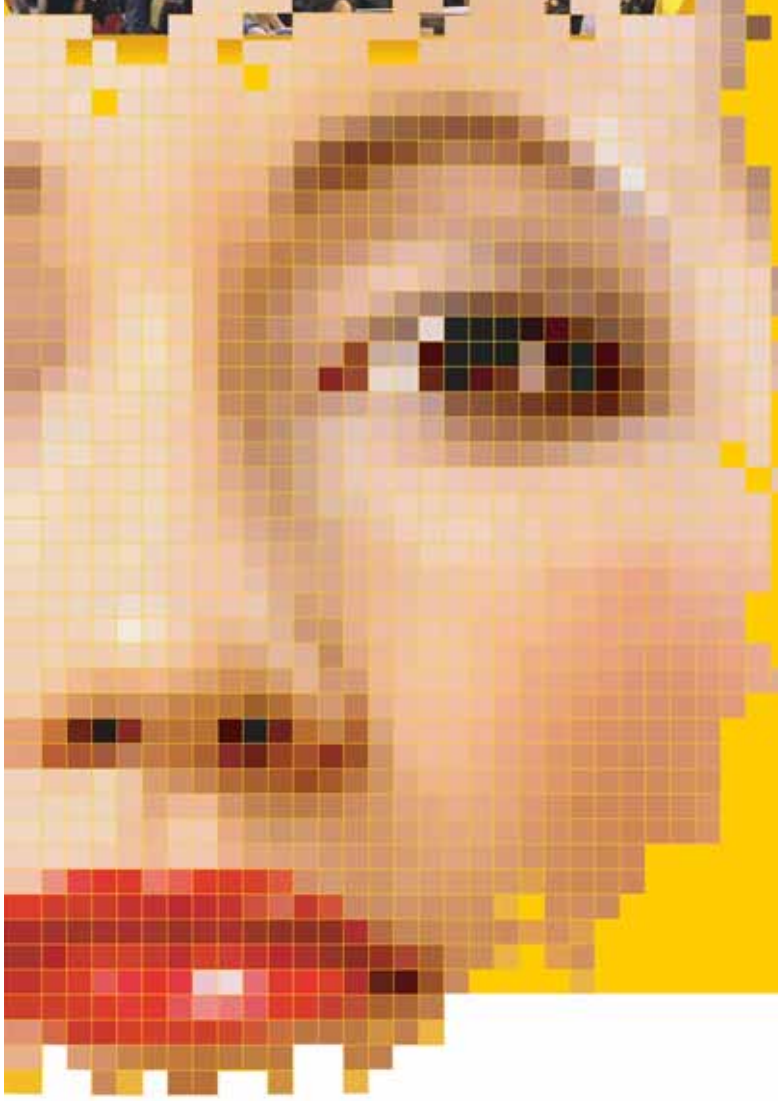


67 Dev97_final 28/7/09 17:41 Page 1



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68-69 Dev97_final 30/7/09 19:03 Page 1

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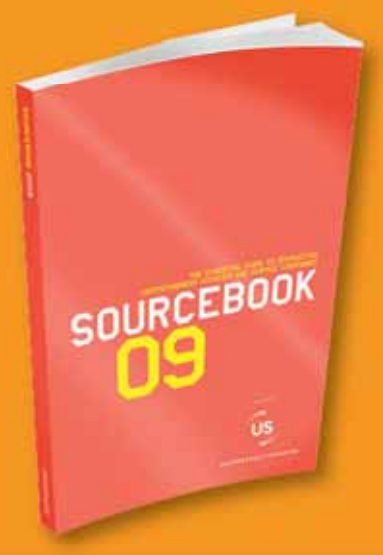

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58 Dev97_final 21/7/09 10:34 Page 1

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71 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:29 Page 1

DIRECTORY

The world's premier listing of games development studios, tools, outsourcing specialists, services and courses...

PEOPLE:
Sensible man Jon Hare joins Jagex
p72

TOOLS:
NaturalMotion's morpheme success
p74

SERVICES:
SMG gets new production director
p75

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72-78 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:43 Page 2

Studio News

This month: Jagex, Realtime Worlds and Activision…

Jagex has hired Industry veteran Jon Hare as its head of publishing.

Hare, who is well known for his work on titles such as *Sensible Soccer*, *Mega-Lo-Mania* and *Cannon Fodder*, will have particular focus on further developing FunOrb.com, the developer's casual games portal.

In his 24-year career Hare has developed more than 30 games on over 20 formats from Sinclair Spectrum to the Nintendo Wii.

Jagex is the UK's largest independent studio and is best known for its *Runescape* MMO, which is popular amongst younger gamers.

"Jagex is a traditional and very British games development company as well as being one of Europe's most successful publishers," said Hare.

"I am really excited to be joining the team and I feel very at home here. I am looking forward to working alongside the management team to help nurture the mentality of innovation and expansion that already exists here and to grow FunOrb into the world's leading online games destination."

www.jagex.com

Dundee developer **Realtime Worlds** has bolstered its management team, hiring Joshua Howard as its program manager.

Most recently an executive at virtual world specialist Hidden City Games, Howard also brings with him experience as studio head of Microsoft's casual development house, Carbonated Games.

"I was drawn to Realtime Worlds because they had the expertise and experience to deliver on their ambitious goals," said Howard. "I am very pleased at the chance to be a part of Realtime Worlds, to help ship *APB*, and to be working with the tremendously talented people here focused on the vision of creating great games."

Howard will be responsible for coordinating Realtime Worlds' development, operations, marketing and business development functions, as well as working with its external partners to successfully deliver the *APB* online gaming experience to millions of gamers.

www.realtimeworlds.com

Two high-profile executives have departed from EA Visceral Games to join a brand new Activision studio located nearby.

Glen Schofield and COO Michael Condrey have departed to lead the new San Francisco Bay Area studio, which will be creating a game based on one of Activision's existing franchises.

Speaking to *Kotaku*, an EA rep said: "EA has been nurturing great developers for 27 years and making room for the next generation is an important part of that process.

"It takes a team to make a great game like *Dead Space*. There's a stunning array of talent at Visceral – creative leaders who now have the opportunity to step into the spotlight and have their talent recognised."

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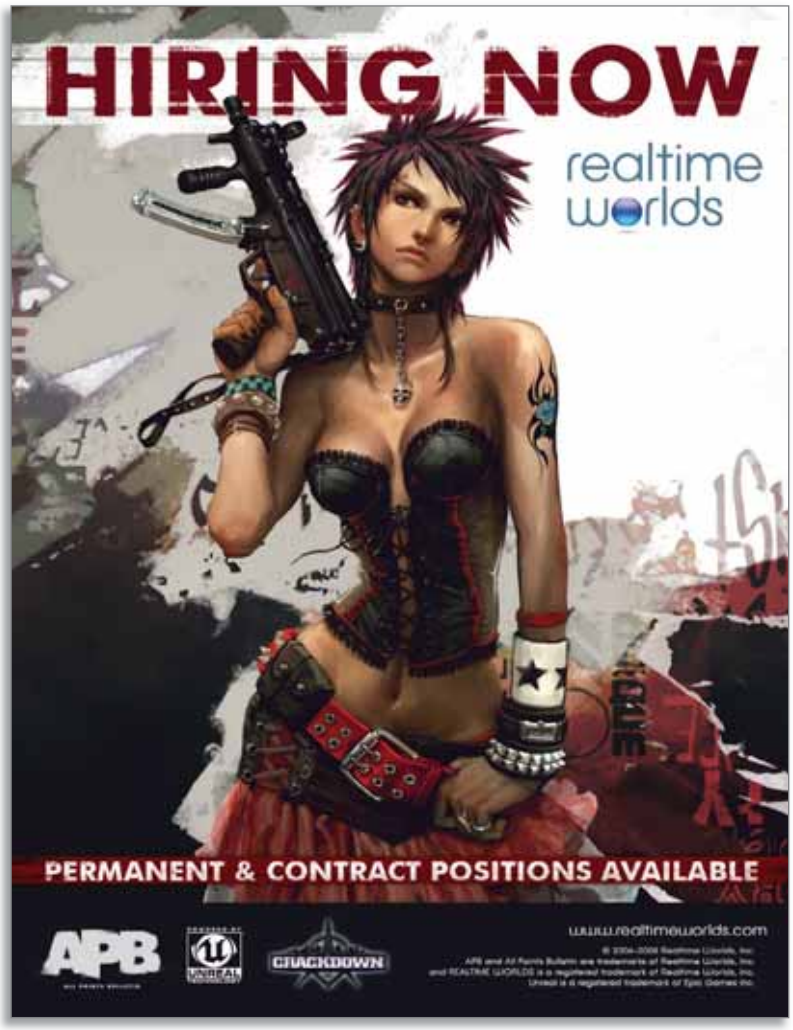

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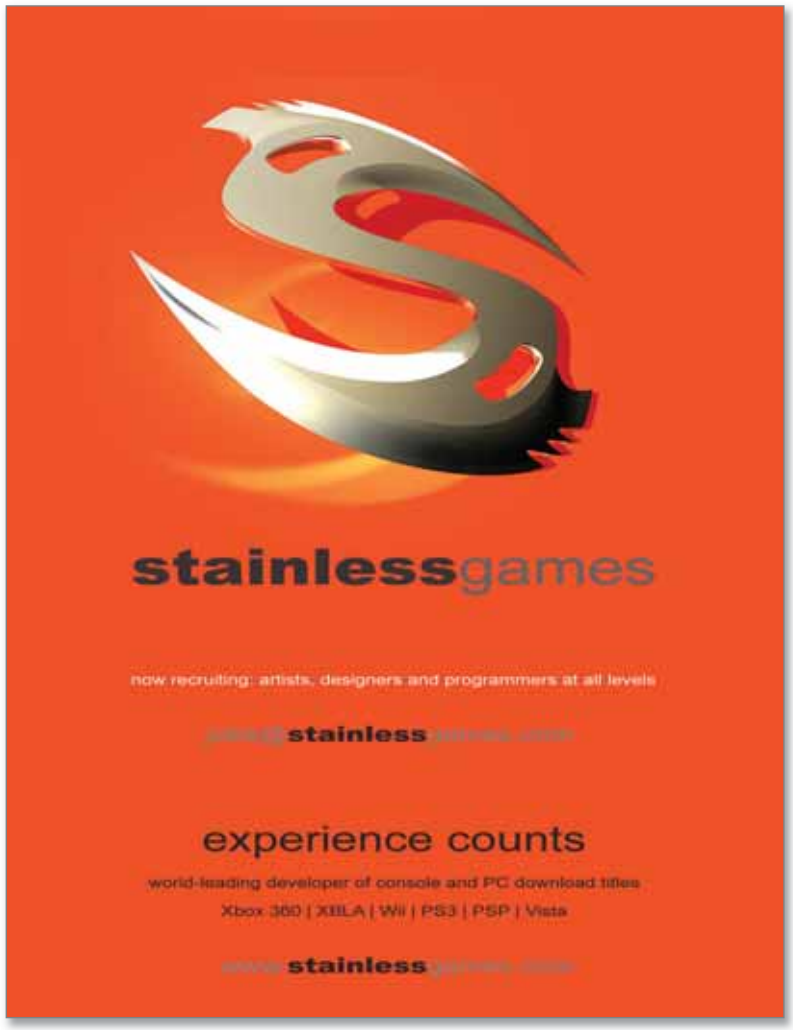
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72-78 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:44 Page 4

Tools News

Demand rises for NaturalMotion's animation technologies

NaturalMotion has experienced an 80 per cent revenue jump during the first half of its 2009 financial year.

The animation middleware company, renowned for its Euphoria and Morpheme technologies, has said that rapid adoption of the latter helped drive takings. Euphoria is best known for being used in *GTA IV* and *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*.

Morpheme is its PS3, 360, Wii and PC graphically-authorable animation engine which is used by the likes of Bioware, CCP, Disney, Eidos and others. The firm also boasts a small internal development studio, which is working on original IP football game *Backbreaker*.

"The first two quarters of our fiscal 2009 have exceeded our revenue and profitability expectations," said Torsten Reil, CEO of NaturalMotion. "We're particularly pleased with the adoption rate of morpheme over the period; a testament to the product's quality as well as the desire by publishers to put their games on solid, future-proof technology foundations."

Meanwhile, Activision has licensed Morpheme for *Tony Hawk: Ride*. The middleware will be used on the PS3 and Xbox 360 versions, developed by Chicago-based Robomodo, and the Wii version, developed by Monkey Buzz. "*Tony Hawk: RIDE*'s groundbreaking skateboard controller offers gamers a uniquely realistic experience," said Christian Staack, vice president of sales for North America at NaturalMotion.
www.naturalmotion.com

Harmonix switches to Hansoft

Rock Band developer Harmonix is the latest studio to adopt **Hansoft**.

"As a rapidly growing studio we needed a server based project management solution that could support internally and externally driven projects, and that was easy to adapt to our iterative development process – Hansoft delivered," said Harmonix production director Michael Verrette.

Hansoft 5.3 is the company's newest suite of tools that provides collaborative scheduling, bug tracking, workload coordination, and document management.

"In the short time we have had Hansoft deployed, it has already increased productivity, communication and visibility across our entire team," added Verrette.

"The new pipeline and workflow tool has allowed Harmonix to automate many of our repetitive and time-consuming production tasks into a streamlined process that the development team has direct interaction with."

Hansoft CEO Patric Palm said that the company "wanted to find a way to take much of the heavy manual work out of managing asset pipelines, and to make it more lean. Seeing how rapidly Harmonix has adapted the pipeline tool, I think we have succeeded."
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72-78 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:44 Page 5

Tool Spotlight

HANSOFT

Hansoft is a fully integrated production management tool that promises to offer fast and easy support to all those involved in the development process.

Providing a single solution for entire organisation, Hansoft is designed with project managers, programmers, artists, executives, outsourcing partners and clients in mind. Rather than delivering a number of complex solutions, a single tool allows co-workers to access their assigned tasks, features, bugs and other work in solo or multiple projects.

Hansoft's portfolio analysis allows for resource usage to be managed across an organisation, and a find all function means administrators can quickly get an overview of a vast range of activities, from what programmers are doing to what engineering tasks are overdue.

Sub-project managers can be delegated planning rights across an infinite number of hierarchical levels, allowing senior management to focus on road-mapping instead of heavy upfront planning.

Using Hansoft also allows for the granting of multiple management rights in parts of the production, to enable enhanced horizontal collaboration in complex and wide-scale projects.

Projects on different timescales and budgets, and agile lightweight projects can be created and managed with a single solution, meaning contrary methods and philosophies can co-exist in the same environment.

Currently used by high profile developers including BioWare, 2K Games, and Epic Games China, Hansoft remains one of the most popular production management tools on the market.

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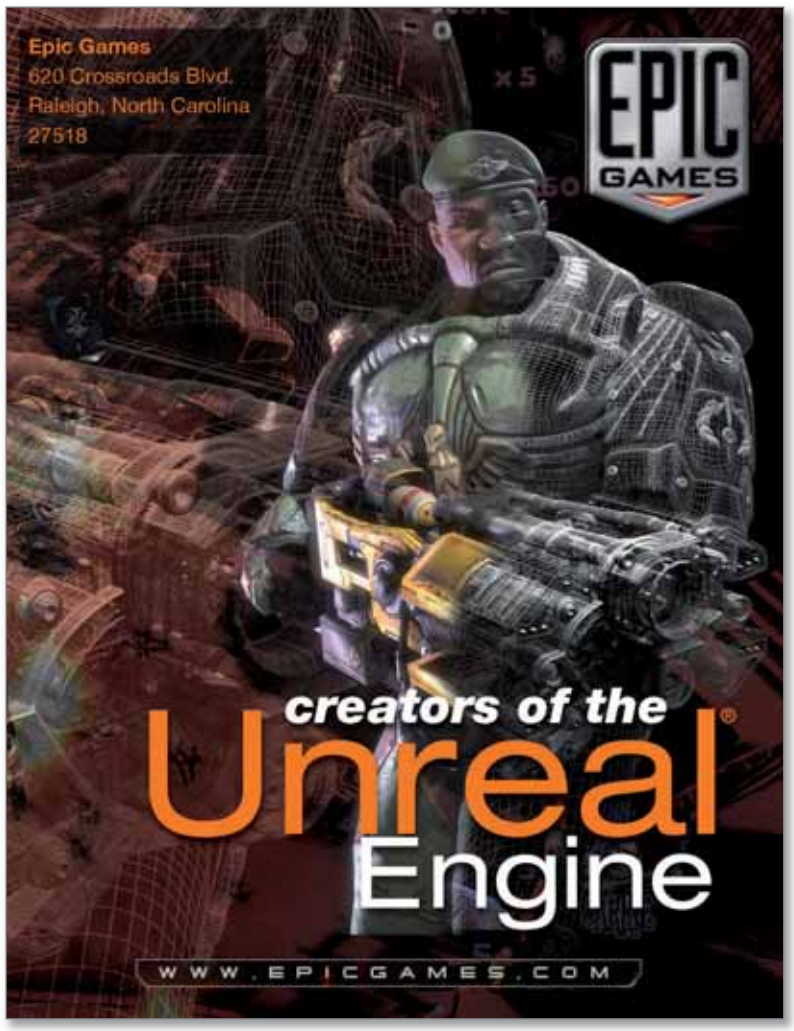

Services News

Rabcat wins Forza 3 contract

Microsoft and Turn 10 have sought the services of art vendor **Rabcat** to build 3D sports cars for upcoming racer *Forza 3*.

Vienna-based Rabcat said that its work in designing the sports cars places *Forza 3* in 'a class of its own in terms of visual quality and technical perfection.'

The outsourced art studio said that it collaborated with Turn 10 to build 'photorealistic' exterior and interior car models for the game.

It wasn't revealed which tools the studio used to build the sports cars.

"For us, working on *Forza Motorsport 3* is an important proof-of-concept and another big step forward in mastering high-end graphic requirements," said Rabcat MD Thomas Schleischitz.

"By adding another top notch project to our company's track record, Rabcat once again confirms and expands its already leading position in the premium art segment of the video game market."
www.rabcat.com

Enzyme expands international presence

Enzyme Testing Labs has opened a new office in Madrid, Spain.

The 5,000 square foot game testing facility promises to offer state-of-the-art technology, and is to be headed-up by quality assurance veteran Miguel Angel Sepúlveda.

Sepúlveda, who has previously worked on QA for Lionhead, Vodaphone and EA, is to lead the Madrid lab in specialising in multilingual linguistic testing and terminology compliance pre-certification.

"I am very excited about joining such a dynamic company and dedicated team of professionals. I look forward to expanding our relationship and presence among European video game publishers and developers by continuing to deliver the highest level of game testing services to our customers, which is an Enzyme Labs trademark," said Sepúlveda.

Along with Sepúlveda, a team of 85 testers and dedicated technical and project management staff will man the facility, which bolsters the international presence of the Canadian firm.
www.enzyme.org

SMG hires new director of production services

To lead the growth of its business, Alex Johnston has joined **SMG Europe** as director of production services.

"Development teams often require high-level assistance and either can't find the right candidates in time or don't need additional staff on a full time basis," said Johnston. "Our service offers to plug the skills gap. This practice is commonplace in the IT, TV and movie industries and, as our industry grows to adapt to the rapidly changing market place, we can see that developers will also follow a similar path."

Game production specialist SMG Europe has already completed work on a number of SCEE titles, and is reported to be contributing to a number of significant releases due in the next 12 months.

"It's important that our guys hit the ground running and add real value from day one," added Johnston. "This itself requires the breadth of experience to quickly find and apply right approaches for a client's particular situation and unique goals. That's what we do"
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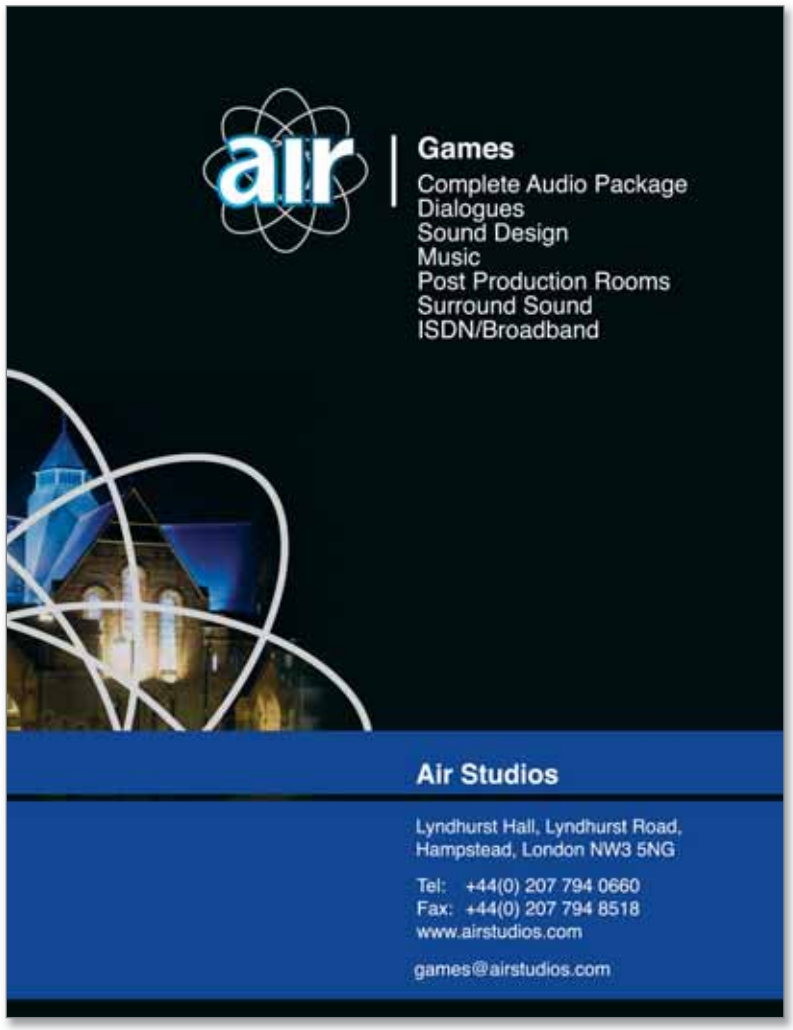

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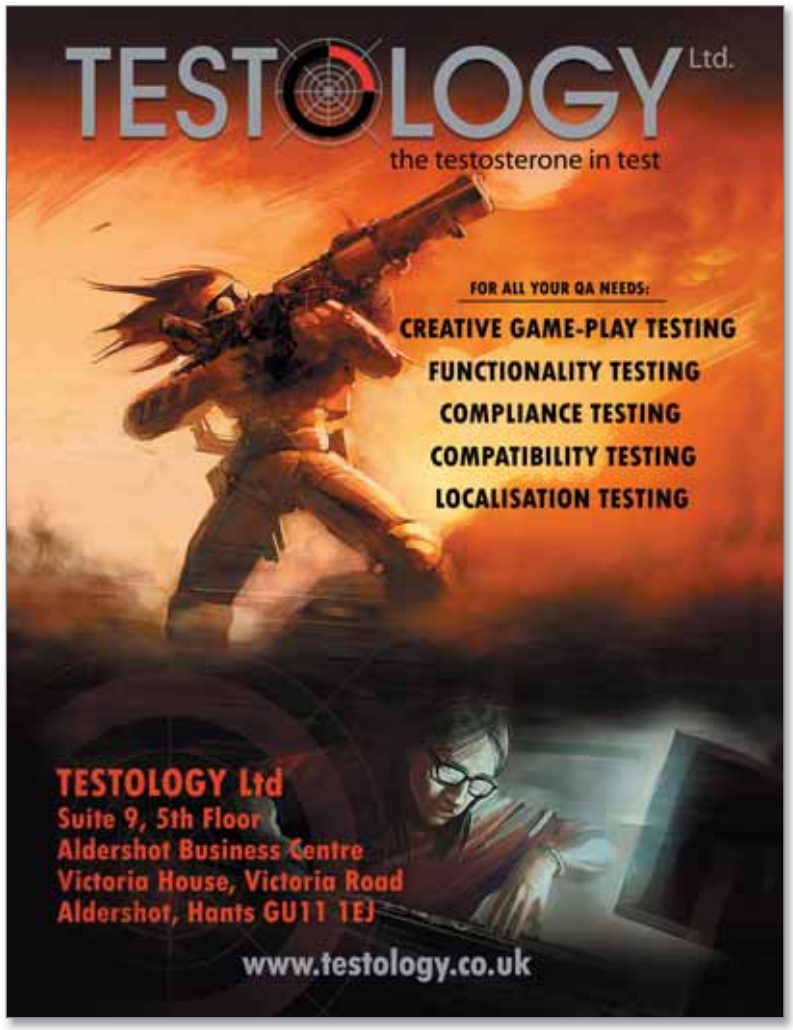

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72-78 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:44 Page 8

Training News

Sony unveils academic PS3 dev kit

Speaking at the Games:Edu strand of the Develop Conference 2009, **SCEE R&D**'s Sarah Lemarie has confirmed that a PS3 dev kit designed for academia is now in closed beta.

"I have exciting news. We have started a PS3 Academic Development Programme, and we're referring to the dev kits as mini-dev kits, which I can best describe as being in a closed beta stage at present. We'll be opening this beta up slowly," confirmed Lemarie, who works as SCEE R&D's education contact and support infrastructure development team manager.

"Of course universities can use Linux to program on the PS3," added Lemarie, "but I would really strongly recommend that if you are interested in the PS3 you look into this, as the experience you will get over Linux is quite incredible."

The dev kit includes a consumer sized PS3 with a low power function, two USB ports, and a full SDK.

"We're making PhyreEngine available as part of this program," added Lemarie.

www.technology.scee.net

University of Teesside gets Skillset accreditation

The **University of Teesside**'s undergraduate degree in Computer Games Programming has become the sixth UK course to be recognised as valuable by the skills council Skillset.

The BSc accreditation was awarded by influential body Skillset, the UK's Sector Skills Council for the Creative Media Industries.

Skillset has strong ties with the games industry and is chaired by renowned developer veteran David Braben.

"We welcome Teesside's BSc in Computer Games Programming joining the list of accredited courses," said Frontier founder Braben. "The panel found facilities are excellent and students also benefit from strong links with local games companies, through industry placements and industry facing events. There is also a good emphasis on teamwork embedded in the course."

Kate O'Connor, Skillset's executive director of policy and development, said: "A very big congratulations to University of Teesside, which has gone the extra mile to involve the computer industry in the course. The accreditation panel was particularly impressed with Teesside's links with regional companies like Eutechnyx and Ubisoft, as well as the maturity of the students' work."

Dr Derek Simpson, Dean of the University of Teesside's School of Computing, said: "I am delighted for the School of Computing and the team to have gained Skillset approval for our BSc in Computer Games Programming.

"We are very strong believers in external accreditation and this approval sits alongside our Skillset accreditation for animation, our Skillset Academy status and our British Computer Society accreditation. We look forward to continuing our strong and positive links with Skillset in the future."

www.skillset.org

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The Sector Skills Council for Creative Media

Skillset would like to congratulate **Teesside University** on its **BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming** attaining Skillset accredited course status.

Skillset accreditation highlights industry recognised, practice-based courses that promote excellence in learning, providing students with the skills and knowledge that employers need.

Applications for accreditation are now open.

To find out how to apply and learn more about Skillset accredited courses, visit: www.skillset.org/games/accreditation

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73 Dev96_final 23/6/09 11:07 Page 1

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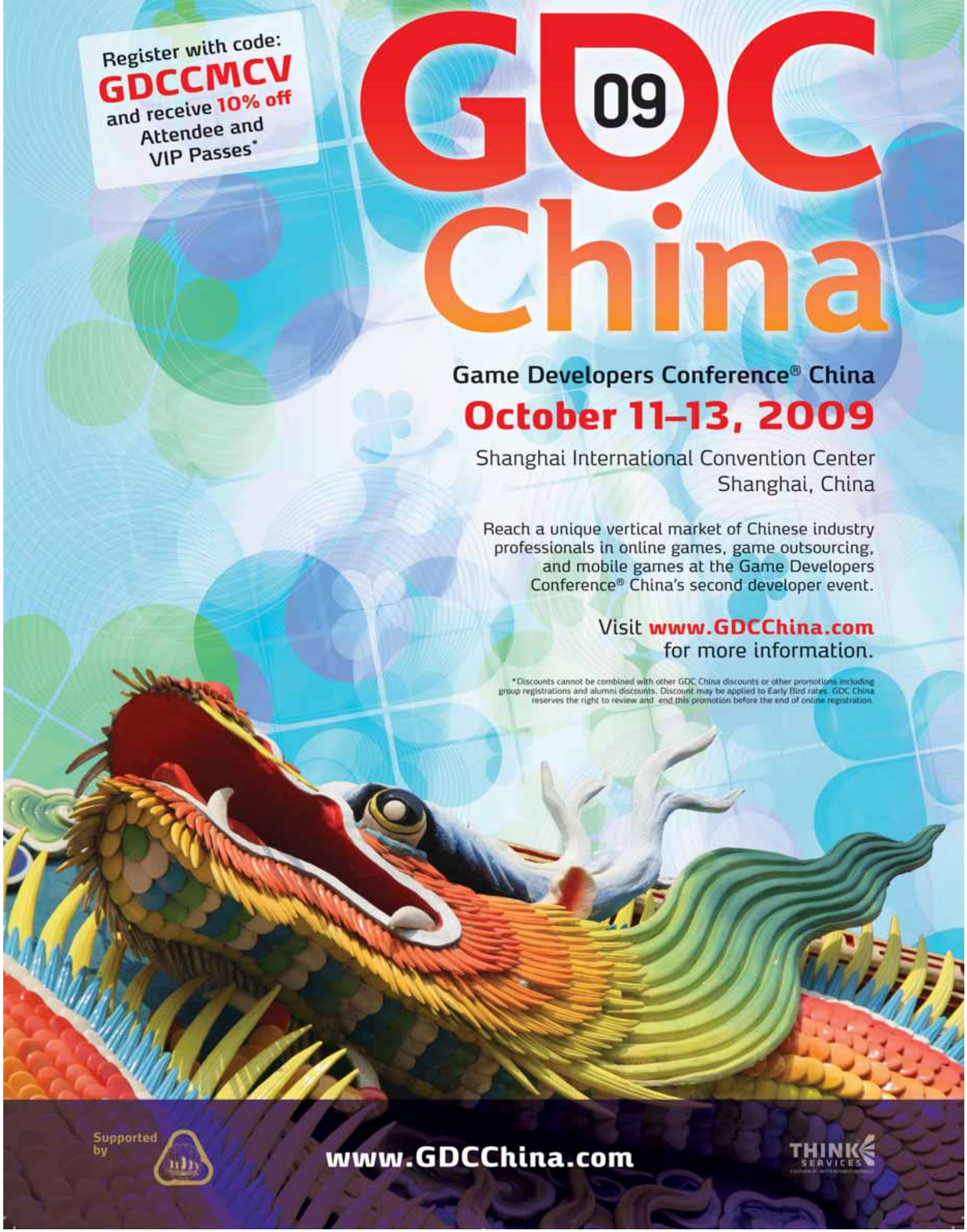

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THINK SERVICES

80-81 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:03 Page 1

Develop 09 in pictures

Over 1,000 developers attended the Develop Conference in Brighton last month to see more than 100 sessions covering the cutting edge of games development. Here's highlights from the show, in pictures. Full reports can be found online at www.develop-online.net…

▲ **HELPING HAND**
Major keynotes from David Perry, David Jones, Nokia's Mark Ollila – and even a talk from *Develop* sister magazine *ME*'s Stuart Dredge – offered real insight into mobile, online and social/casual games. The topic even inspired all the speakers to do plenty of gesticulating too, it seemed.

▲ **DAVID VS DAVID**
One highlight was the 'designer mashup' where Davids Braben and Jones played each other's most famed games and swapped notes. The games were, of course, *Elite* and *GTA*. Biggest surprise was how both of these otherwise staunchly independent developers agreed that much of their success came from the support and dedication of their publishers.

80-81 Dev97_final 30/7/09 18:03 Page 2

▲ STRAIGHT SHOOTER
As if robots on the expo floor weren't enough (*see below*), Peppermint P ran a competition for the industry's best darts players. Here we have Peppermint MD Simon Jones handing prizes to Testronic Labs CEO Neil Goodwin (*top*) and Outsource Media MD Mark Estdale.

▲ DOING THE ROBOT
Testronic Labs had an interesting promotional gimmick throughout the show: a 'robot' that hunted the expo floor for bugs (fake toy ones). Y'know, because they stop bugs in games. There were also numerous pictures taken of the robot with various industry personnel, including Chris White, head of studio at Glu Mobile, Sean Kelly, director of international development at Sony – and *Develop*'s own Rob Crossley.

82 Dev97_final 28/7/09 14:16 Page 1

MY FAVOURITE GAME

Notable developers tell us which game warmed their heart, caught their eye, and ate up their free time…

I LOVE… METAL GEAR SOLID

by Nick Baynes, Game Director – Split/Second, Black Rock Studio

"It's the little things that stick with you. The moment when Psycho Mantis reads your mind and tells you which PlayStation games you've been playing recently (by reading your memory card, the cheat). Under the stress of torture – and button mashing – when you contemplate just giving in and sacrificing Meryl Silverburgh's life for the sake of your thumbs. Starting and ending the game feeling like you're taking part in a Bond movie: snorkeling up into the caves of the remote island hideout and riding off into the sunset with the girl respectively. Even hearing the President's voice at the climax of the end credits providing a rare video game cliffhanger.

Other games in my collection have had more hours spent playing them, some have far more fun core game mechanics, and broken down into its individual components *Metal Gear Solid* contains little that stands out as truly classic.

The sum of these parts, though, makes the original *Metal Gear Solid* one of the most memorable games I've ever played, and one that connects with the player at an emotional level few others have ever achieved. For that reason I found myself caring for Old Snake by the time we got to *Metal Gear Solid 4*, despite the pretension, the self-indulgent cut scenes and the by now unintelligible narrative. For that reason, *Metal Gear Solid* is one of my favourite games of all time."

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EDITORIAL enquiries should go through to Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk, or call him on 01992 535646

To discuss **ADVERTISING** contact Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk, or call her on 01992 535647

83 Dev97_final 30/7/09 19:04 Page 1

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CONTACT

Advertising Manager
Katie Rawlings
Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk
01992 535697

Editor-in-Chief
Michael French
Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk
01992 535696

Deputy Editor
Ed Fear
Ed.Fear@intentmedia.co.uk
01992 535696

84 Dev97_final 27/7/09 10:23 Page 1